Laughing Matters:

Mainstream Political Cartoons under the Military Regime of the Early 1980s in Turkey

Valentina Marcella

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to
obtaining the degree of Doctor of History and Civilization
of the European University Institute

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Department of History and Civilization

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the production of political cartoons in Turkey in the context of authoritarianism and repression that was brought about by the coup d'état of September 12 1980, and by the military rule that followed. It builds on theories of political satire as an active element of political culture. Political cartoons serve as the lens through which the evolution of the political space under the regime is explored.

The analysis revolves around *Gırgır* (Tease), the satirical magazine that in the decade prior to the coup had already contributed to the emergence of a socially and politically critical field with its politically engaged columns and illustrations and that, during the regime, became the best-selling weekly at a national level. Two main issues are investigated. On the one hand, how *Gırgır*'s satire survived under a regime that, in its attempt to turn citizens into a homogeneous, uniform, and apolitical society, came to repress any possibility of criticism. On the other hand, how an alternative political response was elaborated through the cartoons by civil society and intellectuals in reaction to authoritarianism.

Overall, the thesis contributes to the study of the military regime of the early 1980s, of satire in Turkey, of censorship, and of the strategies of dissent in authoritarian regimes.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis presents an historical investigation into the production of satirical illustrations in Turkey in the context of authoritarianism and repression that was brought about by the coup d'état of September 12 1980, and by the military rule that followed. Two main issues are investigated. On the one hand, how the satirical press survived under a regime that, in its attempt to turn citizens into a homogeneous, uniform, and apolitical society, came to repress any possibility of criticism. On the other hand, how an alternative political response was elaborated through graphic satire by civil society and intellectuals in reaction to authoritarianism.

Why research the 1980-1983 military regime

The military coup of 1980 played a key role in the history of modern Turkey. Since the foundation of the republic, in 1923, the country had already suffered two military interventions, one in 1960 and the other in 1971, which had each paved the way for a short phase of military-supervised government. However, the seizure of power in 1980 was different in many respects. This time, all political parties were outlawed and the military took direct control of the state, governing for three years. The goal was ambitious and aimed at the long term. In fact, the encompassing objective was to radically reshape the country by reforming the political system, the institutions, and, not least, society according to a conservative and centralised model. Parallel to that, the army never sought to gain the support of the population and established a highly repressive and authoritarian regime. It is no coincidence that, when elections were held in 1983, the party supported by the junta obtained the lowest number of votes, suggesting that civil society was keen to sever all ties with the military regime.

Despite that, the legacy was and has remained strong. The military had actually managed to reform the institutions radically, creating new bodies and remoulding existing ones by placing carefully chosen individuals in charge, institutionalising the *kadrolaşma* practice (setting up one's own cadre in public offices) that is highly widespread today. Moreover, the constitution that was promulgated under their rule, in 1982, made the junta leader General Kenan Evren president of the republic for a seven-year mandate, thus allowing

his active presence in politics even after the return to parliamentary democracy, until 1989. In addition, the constitution granted Evren and the other generals involved in the coup immunity from prosecution.

A consequence of this legacy is that public criticism and debate concerning the years of the regime remained taboo in the political arena and public opinion for decades. Perhaps the most evident sign of this trend is the lack of a thorough investigation into the abuses of power by the military government. For years the absence of an in-depth inquiry allowed former junta members to simply deny responsibility in the cases of the torture of political prisoners and *desaparecidos* that were recorded under their rule.

Only very recently has this trend begun to change and has the silence been broken at official level – although whether this is the result of a sincere engagement with the matter or for mere political motives will be debated in other contexts. For instance, a national referendum in 2010 led to the adoption of a package of amendments to the constitution of the military. This vote meant the end of immunity for the generals, who were consequently tried for crimes against the state. In the same year, after a decade-long struggle, the Leftist organisation Federation of Revolutionary 78ers was finally able to open the *12 Eylül Utanç Müzesi*, "12th of September Museum of Shame", a touring exhibition that paid homage to the victims of the regime. Nevertheless, the wounds are deep and hard to heal. The memory of those years and the sense of injustice remain very vivid, as the strong reactions to Evren's recent death, on May 9 2015, clearly show (e.g. the spontaneous internet campaign called *#kötübilirdik*[1], demonstrations outside his apartment and during the state funeral).[2]

[1] According to a Muslim custom, during funerals the imam asks relatives and friends of the deceased the ritual question *nasıl bilirdiniz?* (how did you know him/her?). The standard answer is *iyi bilirdik*, meaning "we knew him/her as a good person". However, on the occasion of Evren's death, individuals as well as political and media groups, collectives, and associations spontaneously expressed the unconventional opinion *kötü bilirdik*, "we knew him as a bad person", through their web pages and profiles.

[2] The easing of the debate on the regime is mirrored in the publishing sector, with a number of publications that have recently started to offer new insights into those years. First, scholars and journalists have begun to examine the general experience of the military rule, both through new analytical categories and by reassessing old ones with renewed lucidity (made possible by the long period of time that has elapsed). This trend is exemplified by the professor of sociology and writer Emre Kongar's *12 Eylül Kültürü* (Istanbul, 2007), which pictures the era through some original categories of subjects (namely labour workers, women, intellectuals, and the youth) and issues (among which the economy, torture, religion, education, literary criticism, and popular culture). An example of the second trend is *12 Eylül Darbesi. Hatıralar, Gözlemler, Düşünceler* (Istanbul, 2005) by Davut Dursun, scholar, columnist and current president of the Supreme Council of Radio and Television (RTÜK). The author first details the domestic and international political landscape in which the armed forces seized power, and then presents twelve interviews in which he discusses the military rule with an array of figures who witnessed or contributed to the regime in various ways. These interviewees include journalists, writers, intelligence experts, former ministers, and other politicians, not least Evren in person.
In the second place, works on specific aspects and case studies have also started to mushroom. For instance, this trend is testified by *Arayış. 12 Eylül Darbesi ve Özgürlüğün Bedeli* by journalist Veli Özdemir (Ankara, 2004). This book delves into the short editorial adventure of *Arayış*, the magazine published between 1981 and 1982 by

To research the regime today means to continue with the effort to break the taboos and misconceptions concerning those years, and to pass on to future generations a clearer understanding of that history. This thesis is intended to be a contribution in that respect. By examining multiple dimensions embedded in the publication of the satirical illustrations of the time, this study aims to assess the power relations that came into existence between, on the one hand, the military in power, and, on the other, intellectuals and civil society – represented by the cartoonists and their readership, respectively.

Research questions, case study and contribution

Broadly speaking, this research started as a study of the politically charged intellectual and artistic production of the years of regime. At first I was tempted to focus on the production of overtly dissident work, in order to assess the strongest examples of political criticism that artists and intellectuals were able to express at the time. It goes without saying

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Bülent Ecevit, the leader of the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP), after he resigned from active politics as a consequence of the coup. Significant contributions on specific aspects are arising also from shorter studies, like the article "12 Eylül, Medya ve Demokratikleşme Sorunu" by Tezcan Durna and Ayşe İnal (*mülkiye* Vol. XXXIV, No. 268, (2010): pp. 123-145), professors of communication and journalism, who have examined newspaper reactions to the coup and the following changes in media trends. Relevant examples are found also beyond Turkish academia. To mention but one, the political scientist Gilles Dorronsoro's article on "discreet torture", which pinpoints the origins of this form of torture precisely in the 1980-1983 rule, and has appeared in the Paris-based European Journal of Turkish Studies ("La torture discrète: capital social, radicalisation et désengagement militant dans un régime sécuritaire", *European Journal of Turkish Studies* No. 8, (2008)).

Moreover, the gradual breaking of the taboos surrounding the military era is encouraging a number of non-academic publications, some of which are as relevant as their academic counterparts insofar as they provide new documentation and material. One of them is *12 Eylül Yasakları. Halk Bunu Bilmesin* (Istanbul, 2010) by the journalist Mehmet Sucu, who gathered in this volume the prohibitions that various governments have imposed on the press at different times between 1959 and 1985, with a particular focus on the military triennium. Another one is *12 Eylül 1980 Akıl Tutulması* (Istanbul, 2010) by the photojournalist Kadir Can, whose pictures guide the reader through the most salient and dramatic events of the 1970s, up to the coup. Thorough research is also being carried out by human rights associations, which are producing accurate reports with factual information. To mention one example, *12 Eylül 1980 Askeri Darbesine İlişkin Suç Duyurusu* (Ankara, 2010) by İnsan Hakları Derneği, Turkey's Human Rights Association, provides a detailed list of, among others, the people condemned to death, the victims of state violence, and the torture techniques used against political prisoners under the regime.

And, finally, memory of and research on the regime were liberalised also in the media, which is contributing to raise awareness of those years through detailed investigations on sensitive issues. An example in the print media is the testimony of the conditions in the women's section of Diyarbakır prison offered by former prisoner Nuran Çamlı Maraşlı, published by the independent press agency *Bianet* (acronym for *Bağımsız İletişim Ağı*, Independent Communication Network) on July 2, 2003. As far as non-print media are concerned, we could mention the film industry, with the ground-breaking documentary movie *5 No'lu Cezaevi: 1980-1984*, directed by Çayan Demirel (2009, Surela Film, Istanbul), which discloses the atrocities committed against Kurdish detainees in the above-mentioned Diyarbakır prison. These works are of the utmost importance in the light of their broad visibility, which makes them accessible to a wider public than the books, academic articles, and reports mentioned above.

that the authoritarian government forbade the circulation of works that did not conform to the official ideology, let alone those that criticised the military; therefore, this perspective implied a selection of titles that followed unconventional trajectories of circulation, like the black and foreign markets, either as a consequence of being banned or through the decision of their authors and producers from the outset. Notwithstanding the appeal of overtly critical texts, to delve into the sphere of alternative channels of production, dissemination, and consumption presented the limit of accounting for works that, no matter how political and critical, were able to reach only a selected public during the regime, and thus did not have a large-scale impact on the population. Besides enriching the literature on forbidden works, this perspective was likely to simply confirm that the army did not tolerate or allow the presence of highly critical political works, which would add little original contribution to a broader understanding of the period.[3]

In the light of these concerns, the perspective was shifted and research engaged in the cultural production that, by contrast, retained both a critical political line and an appearance in the mainstream market. This focus seemed to be a more appropriate way to shed a truly new light on the military rule. Therefore, the question to be addressed was as follows: was any written, visual, or performed text able to express a critical view of the regime without being subjected to the grip of censorship and the authors' persecution? This question identified a particular genre as its ideal research ground: graphic satire.

Turkey has a rich tradition of graphic satire dating back to late Ottoman times. It was, in fact, in 1867 that the precursors of modern Turkey's satirical cartoons first appeared, in the

[3] An increasing number of studies are treating the harsh struggle of the army in power against artists, journalists, and intellectuals from several angles. Important points of reference are the studies on Turkish media and censorship, such as *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Türkiye'de Basın Sansürü* by writer and journalist Alpay Kabacalı (Istanbul, 1990). This work, which examines censorship since the establishment of the regular press in the Ottoman Empire, predictably dwells on the military rule as an era that deeply affected the means of communication; the broad time frame in which the author discusses the status of the press in the 1980s actually stresses aspects of continuity and breaks with previous trends.
Other studies on the Turkish press delve directly into the years of military rule, often in comparison with the attitude of the army in the aftermath of the previous coups of 1960 and 1971. Two examples are the book *Darbeler ve Türk Basını* by the journalist Hayati Tek (Ankara, 2003) and the more recent set of short articles by various authors gathered under the umbrella title "Kılıç Hep Kalemi Kesti. 1860'lardan 1980'lere iktidar-basın ilişkileri", published in the history magazine *NTV Tarih* (No. 15, (April 2010): pp. 32-42).
Besides these works that touch upon the regime and censorship in relatively general terms, the evidence that the army did not allow the presence of politically engaged art and culture lies in the analyses of specific forbidden works, like the already mentioned *Arayış. 12 Eylül Darbesi ve Özgürlüğün Bedeli* by Özdemir (footnote 2). The persecution of specific artists and intellectuals has been covered also outside Turkish academia, including by scholars in fields other than the Turkish studies. One of the most widely researched and debated cases is definitely the one of actor, director, and scriptwriter Yılmaz Güney. Interest in Güney and his filmography became widespread soon after the regime, as testified by film theorist Roy Armes's *Third World Film Making and the West* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1987), and never lost its momentum, as it is shown by the more recent *An Accented Cinema. Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (Princeton and Oxford, 2001) by Hamid Naficy, scholar of cultural studies of diaspora, exile, and postcolonial cinemas.

newspaper *Istanbul*. Three years later, in 1870, the first satirical magazine of the Ottoman Empire was born: *Diyojen* (Diogenes). *Diyojen* was founded by the eminent writers and journalists Namık Kemal and Teodor Kasap. Even in this early phase, when cartoons were created by intellectuals as an occasional sideline activity,[4] their political value did not go unnoticed and *Diyojen*, as well as being the first model of editorial satire, soon became the first case of a banned satirical magazine.[5]

Graphic satire is the genre that more than any other has the power to negotiate the boundaries of what it is possible (either approved or moral) to say and what is not. Striking a balance between farce and seriousness, art and politics, entertainment and denunciation, fiction and reality, its hybrid nature allows it to express subtle yet merciless criticism. As the Italian satirical painter and writer Melantòn argues in his essay on the art of laughing, satire is boisterous and revolutionary; driven by a sense of justice, it denounces openly and often bitterly the facts and misdeeds of the world and its rulers.[6] In the light of this, the actual question of this study is, was the satirical potential successfully at play also in the repressive context of the regime?

The answer was initially sought in various high circulation print media that printed satirical illustrations. This preliminary overview determined the choice of the case study: *Gırgır* (Tease),[7] the weekly satirical magazine that in the decade prior to the coup had already contributed to the emergence of a socially and politically critical field with its columns and illustrations *engagées*.

Gırgır made its debut in 1969 and its style of humour was typically of a sexual nature. It addressed ordinary people and portrayed them with all their faults and vices. These cartoons were the first in Turkey to break the tradition of an elitist satire that was representative of and addressed a highly educated public. Throughout the 1970s, the nature of the magazine became increasingly social and political. Its illustrations began to depict key issues of the time such as workers' rights, the education system, and the consequences of the rapid urbanisation such as unemployment, the *mahalle* (neighbourhood) dimension of social interactions (and, inevitably, control), as well as the clash between the "modern" city lifestyle and a more

[4] Cartooning became a fully recognised profession in the 1930s, with the first full-time appointment of the cartoonist Cemal Nadir to a newspaper paving the way for the elevation of this activity.
[5] Mete Tunçay, ed., 1985. "Diyojen." *Tarih ve Toplum*, No. 17, and Hüseyin Doğramacıoğlu, "Namık Kemal'in Diyojen gazetesindeki mizahî yazıları üzerine bir değerlendirme," *Turkish Studies. International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic* Vol. 7, No. 1, (Winter 2012): pp. 935-951.
[6] Antonio Mele (Melantòn), 2006. "La tentazione comica. Proposizione per un'indagine critica sull'arte del riso e del sorriso." *Centro Studi Gabriele Galantara*.
http://www.galantara.it/Ricerche/argomenti/Latentazionecomica_Melanton.pdf (accessed 10/02/2015).
[7] For a debate on the most appropriate translations of the word *gırgır* see Chapter 3.

conservative rural culture; in other words, the various facets of the difficult urban integration that *arabesk* (arabesque) culture so successfully narrated in the same years. These issues were accompanied by illustrations that targeted political leaders, members of radical organisations, corruption, and the so-called "deep state". The professional cartoonists who worked for the magazine were not the only ones to contribute, readers also sent in their own amateur works for publication – even some political prisoners. Thus, by the time of the coup *Gırgır* had affirmed itself as a major vehicle for political satire.

As well as its political line and popular, anti-elitist, identity, another reason for selecting *Gırgır* as the case study was its sales figures. On the eve of the coup *Gırgır* was the most popular satirical magazine at national level, selling some 300,000 copies every week.[8] This made it one of the best known magazines in the whole country, suggesting that it was a title that the regime could have hardly ignored.

This study focuses on the political strategies elaborated in *Gırgır* under the military rule. These include not only the content of the satire, but also aspects of the structural organisation of the magazine through which its authors and readership came to create a collective political response to the regime. This focus aims to answer a number of distinct yet interrelated questions: Which political figures was satire able to portray? Which policies did it criticise? Which events did it denounce? How were these goals achieved from a stylistic point of view? Which lines were adopted to circumvent the risk of censorship? Considering the history and evolution of the period in question, which key figures, themes, and aspects of the regime were not touched upon? What political strategies did the magazine elaborate beyond the illustrations? How successful and effective was the balance between caution and engagement? What limits did censorship and the prohibition of the magazine impose on its satire? How was the relationship with the readership built? What does *Gırgır* reveal about the sector of civil society embodied by its readers? Why did the military tolerate the existence of this magazine? In sum, what does the study of *Gırgır* reveal about the regime and the political crisis? What does it reveal about the satire of that period? By addressing these questions the aim of the thesis is to contribute to contemporary studies in the fields of the history of the military regime and the history of graphic satire in Turkey.

[8] Orhan Koloğlu, *Türkiye Karikatür Tarihi* (Istanbul, 2005), p. 342.

Overall, the thesis makes an original contribution to the historiography on modern Turkey in three ways. From an artistic and cultural perspective, the study of *Gırgır*'s multi-dimensional political engagement establishes the extent to which satire changed as a result of the authoritarian government and, correspondingly, the extent to which it was able to retain its own essential connotation of social and political denunciation. More broadly, it establishes to what extent and how it was possible to challenge the regime through accepted (as opposed to underground) channels. This assessment breaks with the general assumptions that during the military rule satire lost its momentum and it became impossible to promote politically charged culture in the mainstream market. Though largely valid, this understanding – which dominates the historiography[9] – is too simplistic and fails to consider the rare yet important exceptions to the general trend.

At political level, the analysis of the characters and situations portrayed in the illustrations allows us to retrace the major developments of those three years. Moreover, the representation of specific political figures, policies, and institutions gives us the opportunity to trace a profile of the issues that cartoonists and their public perceived as the most critical and problematic. Likewise, the possibility of the existence of these representations, in other words the fact they were tolerated, was indeed exceptional, and sheds new light on the priorities and concerns of the junta.

From a social point of view, the examination of ordinary citizens' involvement in the satire of *Gırgır*, both as readers and as contributors, reveals the reactions and political positions of a representative sector of civil society vis-à-vis the regime. Readers' active support of *Gırgır* and exposure of their own political views in the pages of the magazine reveal a story of collective participation and political complicity that differs from the assumption that in 1980 the population was simply divided between, on the one hand, a meek majority either grateful to or scared of the regime, and, on the other, dissenting fringes carrying on their political engagement exclusively through underground channels. The investigation of these dynamics contributes to the understanding of a more complex reality made also of citizens that, like cartoonists, experimented with ways in between.

[9] This assumption is even shared by some of the most distinguished experts on Turkey's satire. Namely, cartoon historian (and himself a cartoonist) Tan Oral claims that the cartoons of the post-1980 era cannot be compared to the ones of the 1950s and 1960s in terms of political criticism and impact, and argues that in 1980 satire almost disappeared from the press ("Türk Mizah ve Karikatürü (1980-1995)", *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* Vol. 14). Similarly, in his volume on the history of Turkish humour and satire, cartoonist Ferit Öngören asserts that in the immediate aftermath of the coup it became impossible to make cartoons and humour (*Cumhuriyet'in 75 yılında Türk Mizahı ve Hicvi* (Istanbul, 1998), pp. 120-121).

On a more general level, this research is a contribution to the history of censorship, and these three perspectives integrate the thesis in the broader field of studies on the role of dissent and consent in authoritarian and totalitarian regimes.

The state of the art in the field

The thesis is set at the crossroads of the history of the regime and the history of Turkey's graphic satire. Both fields have been extensively researched in the past and count a number of studies – the achievements, as much as the pitfalls, of which constitute the starting point of this thesis.

Historiography of the 1980-1983 military regime

Shortly after it came to an end, the regime began to attract increasing scholarly attention in the fields of humanities and social sciences. Relevant contributions to the understanding of the social, political and economic factors as well as of broader historical developments that led to the military seizure of power flourished both in Turkish and foreign academia, along with works that analyse the conduct of the army in power and the implications for the future and stability of the country. Here we will remember some of the titles that opened the debate or that led it in new directions.

In Turkey, the first two publications on the matter were authored by journalists, namely Mehmet Ali Birand and Hasan Cemal. Birand published *12 Eylül Saat 04:00* as early as 1984, tracing the steps and major events that led to the military intervention with particular reference to the influence of United States diplomacy.[10] Cemal, instead, published the personal journal that he wrote during the regime, consisting of the passages that censorship had prevented him from publishing in the form of articles at the time.[11]

[10] Mehmet Ali Birand, *12 Eylül Saat 04:00* (Istanbul, 1984).
[11] Hasan Cemal, *Demokrasi Korkusu. 12 Eylül Günlüğü* (Ankara, 1986) and *Tank Sesiyle Uyanmak. 12 Eylül Günlüğü – 2* (Ankara, 1986).

The first scholarly work that addresses the military rule came from the US academia, from the political science professor Frank Tachau. His *Turkey: The Politics of Authority, Democracy, and Development*,[12] written soon after the end of the regime (1984), discusses the modernisation of the country from the 1950s onwards, which the author conceives as the achievement of a synthesis between Turkey's peculiar identity and the Western model of modernity. The analysis revolves around the interweaving of three issues in the process of modernisation, namely authority, democracy, and economic development, and emphasises four major aspects – constitutional change, economic development, sociocultural change, and foreign affairs. As far as the military triennium is concerned, Tachau was the first to argue that the 1980 coup was predictable, and that "given these critical circumstances [widespread terrorism, economic crisis and political paralysis], one may wonder why the military did not intervene much earlier than September 12, 1980".[13] This is a rather brave statement given that it was made when the harsher aspects of the military regime were still very vivid in the mind of both Turkey's people and the foreign media. More importantly, Tachau's book explores the main areas of the constitution ratified in 1982, not least the measures which conferred extra power to the military. The author wisely warns against the danger of the ambiguous, broad, and abstract way in which rights are stated and articles formulated, which could pave the way for a serious limitation of freedoms without violating the constitution.[14]

Tachau's book is the first example of a trend that may be detected also in later works, that is that some of the most interesting and original analyses of the regime have emerged from studies with a broader focus, which often cover the history of modern Turkey from the late-Ottoman era or from the proclamation of the republic. Although it could appear paradoxical to rely on these general accounts for a three-year period, the large time frame has the merit of providing a clear picture of the roots and legacy of the regime by inscribing it into the wider national and international context. Two outstanding representatives of this trend appeared in 1993 in the Anglo-Saxon and Dutch schools of Turkish studies, thanks to historians Feroz Ahmad and Erik Jan Zürcher, who published *The Making of Modern Turkey* and *Turkey: A Modern History*, respectively.[15]

Ahmad's work traces the work of generations of reformers, revealing the steps – in some case revolutions – by which contemporary Turkey was formed. Conceived under the

[12] Frank Tachau, *Turkey: The Politics of Authority, Democracy, and Development* (New York, 1984).
[13] Id., p. 82.
[14] Id., pp. 44-59.
[15] Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London, 1993) and Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London and New York, 2004).

military rule, as the preface explains, this study approaches the Turkish army as "a dynamic institution which responds to social change, and abandon[s] the notion of a static body which stands outside or above society mediating conflict like a neutral referee".[16] Regarding the regime, the book provides a detailed chronicle-style account of the years that preceded and followed the coup. Particularly interesting is his interpretation of the restoration of civilian power in 1983, which he explains as being determined by the military realising that Turkey was "too complex a society to function without politics ... there were now too many competing groups even within the ruling circles, and they required a political arena to compete in".[17] Later on, while reflecting on the consequences of the military triennium, Ahmad estimates that the myth of the army as a political institution was undermined by the increasingly open debate on the regime after 1983, in which contradictions between Kemalist principles and the policies of the junta began to emerge. He then concludes (perhaps too optimistically) that the same increasing political maturity led the general public to question the army also as a guarantee against corruption and ineffective politics, suggesting that a political and non-pro-military conscience had started gaining ground.

Zürcher's book is perhaps the most up-to-date account of Turkey's modern history until the turn of the millennium, since its underlying function was to fill the gap between textbooks and the detailed analyses published in articles and monographs. In his book, Zürcher rejects the paradigm that has long dominated the study of modern Turkey (detectable to some extent in Tachau, for example), that is, that of a struggle between people inspired by Western systems as the only path to progress, on the one hand, and reactionaries who oppose innovation, on the other. The author argues against the "distasteful"[18] idea of Western superiority that this paradigm implies; in response, he offers a new interpretation of the forces at play in the building of today's Turkey. His contribution to the scholarship on the regime lies in the discussion of the dynamics that prompted the generals to intervene. The author ascribes the military intervention to the birth of Kurdish separatism and the threat of Islamic fundamentalism, in addition to the increasing problems of law and order, the deadlocked political system and the economy in tatters – which are usually recognised as the undisputed reasons for the coup. These five factors are explained in the broader context of social change, the birth of trade unions, foreign relations, the Cyprus question, and Armenian terrorism.

[16] Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London, 1993): p. ix.
[17] Id., p. 13.
[18] Id., p. 6.

Moreover, Zürcher identifies the struggle against terrorism as the most successful achievement of the regime, while also clearly insisting on repression as its darkest side.

Comprehensive monographs on modern Turkey that contribute to the historiography of the regime continued to flourish in the 2000s. Among the most original authors, let us mention the historian and sociologist Hamit Bozarslan, in the French academia, the Turkey expert Andrew Mango in the Anglo-Saxon world, and political scientist Ersin Kalaycıoğlu in Turkey.

Bozarslan's *Histoire de la Turquie contemporaine*[19] traces the history of modern Turkey from the Young Turk revolution of 1908 to the 2002 elections. The author rejects the periodisation traditionally adopted by historians, along with some widespread beliefs like the interpretation of Kemalism, the founding ideology of the Republic of Turkey, as a doctrine simply built upon the dichotomy of a modern West versus a backward Eastern Muslim world. Alternatively, Bozarslan examines the evolution of ideologies and trends through political eras and generations, and explains the crises that have characterised Turkey's past century in their framework. In his remarkable analysis he traces the origins of political radicalism to the 1960s, and presents 1968 as a year of exacerbation rather than the starting point – as it is often suggested to be the case. The ideologies that spread rapidly and radically throughout the 1960s and 1970s are explained both in relation to the main cities and provinces, stressing the declared sympathy and protection of the right-wing by a section of the political class, the armed forces, and mafia groups. This latter aspect is also present in the account of the years of the regime, along with a report on the putting into practice of the conservative, ultranationalist project of the military.

In the same year as Bozarslan, Mango proposed a complementary account in *The Turks Today*.[20] This political and cultural examination of Turkey's society initially revolves around the roles of its leaders – from Mustafa Kemal Atatürk to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and then follows specific developments by topic, including the economy, education, the Kurdish issue, and Turkey's efforts to join the European Union. Mango provides a vivid description of the social and political climate that paved the way for the regime; his account offers a clear picture of the politicisation of several sectors of society, and of the key role played by the economy in the military's seizure of power and ruling performance.

[19] Hamit Bozarslan, *Histoire de la Turquie contemporaine* (Paris, 2004).
[20] Andrew Mango, *The Turks Today* (London, 2004).

Lastly, Kalaycıoğlu's *Turkish Dynamics: Bridge across Troubled Lands*[21] offers a detailed account of Turkey's transformation from the end of the nineteenth century to its rising international importance on several fronts in 2004 (when Turkey presented a constructive approach to the Cyprus issue and began to cooperate with the United Stated in Iraq, and the European Council established the beginning of the European Union accession negotiations for the following year). Kalaycıoğlu provides a detailed social, political, and financial chronicle, which is very technical, insofar as it is supported by data figures and tables, yet also very vivid insofar as it integrates them with slices of life. This is also true for the section dedicated to the period of interest here. In fact, the author captures the aspirations and feelings of the changing society of the years prior to the coup, in particular those that animated the students' revolts and those of political parties vis-à-vis the latter. Similarly, his account of the post-1980 years is characterised by a clear explanation of the goals and reforms of the junta, not least in the moral-religious field, as well as of the domestic and international developments that caused the political identity crisis of the youth.

The historiography on the regime that emerges from these broad studies is enriched by analyses that, instead, deal with the military rule more specifically. These works, too, belong to various disciplines and academic traditions. From a temporal point of view, the first examples took almost a decade to begin to flourish, suggesting that academia initially inherited the taboos that were explained regarding the political and institutional world in the first pages, at least to some extent and indirectly (lack of or impossibility to access sources). It is presumably no coincidence that the first relevant contribution of this kind was published in 1990, just a few months after Evren had exited the political arena at the end of his presidential mandate. Ironically, this first specific study debates precisely the issue of democracy.

The text in question is *The Crisis of Turkish Democracy* by political scientist Clement Henry Dodd.[22] A first short version of this book appeared as early as 1983, and a second extended edition was published in 1990. The latter presents a detailed investigation into the presence of the Turkish army in politics from the beginning of the first multi-party experience in 1946 to the end of the 1980s. Predictably, the analysis largely develops around the three military interventions. Their dynamics are often compared and connected with each other, resulting in a well-informed account of the interplay between civil and military power and the way its precarious balance has shaped Turkish politics since the 1960 coup.

[21] Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *Turkish Dynamics: Bridge across Troubled Lands* (New York and Basingstoke, 2005).
[22] Clement Henry Dodd, *The Crisis of Turkish Democracy* (Huntingdon, 1990).

A legal perspective is offered by jurist Ergun Özbudun, who analyses half a century of Turkish politics focusing on the country's experience with democracy in a number of monographs, in particular in *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation*[23] and *Democratization and the Politics of Constitution-Making in Turkey*, the latter published with colleague Ömer Faruk Gençkaya.[24] Özbudun examines the 1980 coup in terms of continuity with the previous military interventions and his analyses revolve around the 1982 constitution, which he defines as "another missed opportunity to create political institutions with broad consensus".[25]

The military influence on politics is also treated in studies that do not merely approach the issue through the lens of democracy. A significant contribution comes from the Anglo-Saxon academia with the monograph *Turkish Politics and the Military* by William Hale, a professor of Turkish politics, who discusses the historical evolution of the political participation of the army from the late eighteenth century to the years after the end of the regime.[26] The political scientist Ümit Cizre also explains the powerful political role of the army as "the outcome of historical-structural and behavioural parameters of military-civilian interactions" in her article *The Anatomy of the Turkish Military's Political Autonomy*.[27] Furthermore, *Context and Circumstance: the Turkish Military and Politics* by Turkey analyst Gareth Jenkins examines the institutional processes that allow the presence of the armed forces in politics considering also their position on a number of foreign policy issues.[28]

Other original perspectives that have contributed to a better understanding of the regime include the diplomatic analysis offered by İhsan Duran Dağı, a professor of international relations. In his article *Democratic Transition in Turkey, 1980-1983: The Impact of European Diplomacy*,[29] Dağı explores the relations between Turkey, on the one hand, and Europe and the United States, on the other, especially in terms of Western responses to the military seizure of power and to the ruling policies of the junta. Dağı reveals that the widespread idea that the generals were committed to a quick restoration of democracy is incorrect. This statement has long been made on the ground that after three years in power the

[23] Ergun Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation* (Boulder and London, 2000).
[24] Ergun Özbudun and Ömer Faruk Gençkaya, *Democratization and the Politics of Constitution-Making in Turkey* (Budapest and New York, 2009).
[25] Ergun Özbudun, *op. cit.*, 2000, p. 57.
[26] William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military* (London, 1994).
[27] Ümit Cizre, "The Anatomy of the Turkish Military's Political Autonomy", *Comparative Politics* Vol. 29, No. 2, (January 1997), pp. 151-166.
[28] Gareth Jenkins, *Context and Circumstance: the Turkish Military and Politics* **(**London, 2001).
[29] İhsan Duran Dağı, "Democratic Transition in Turkey, 1980-1983: The Impact of European Diplomacy", in *Turkey: Identity, Democracy, Politics*, ed. Sylvia Kedourie (London and Portland, 1996), pp. 124-141.

junta called the general elections which marked the return to civilian rule, showing no will to establish a long-term dictatorship. By contrast, by investigating the reactions of Western institutions to the military rule, Dağı claims that the transition to parliamentary democracy was planned over more than a three-year time period and that, ultimately, it was the commitment to the West that accelerated this process.

The titles discussed so far are a small and clearly not exhaustive sample of the multitude of studies that contribute to the understanding of the military rule and that are rising in number and foci, as explained earlier (see footnote 2). The various lenses through which scholars have been discussing the regime provide an exhaustive picture of the performance of the army in power. Overall, it is possible to summarise that beyond the different perspectives and analytical frameworks, the historiography tends to agree on two judgments. On the one hand, it asserts the success of the military rule in putting an end to the political violence that had led the country to the brink of civil war throughout the 1970s, and in laying the basis for the realisation of an economic reform package that rescued Turkey from the financial crisis. On the other hand, it acknowledges the highly repressive character of the regime, which repeatedly perpetrated violations of civil rights against civil society in the name of a total depoliticisation of society and its institutions.

Historiography on graphic satire in Turkey

Turkey's graphic satire has as rich a historiography as that of the military regime. By coincidence, the two also began to flourish around the same time, in particular from the late 1980s onwards.

The pioneer in the field is undoubtedly Turgut Çeviker, a cartoon historian who, between 1986 and 1991, published three volumes on Turkish cartoons that may still be deemed the most comprehensive work on the subject.[30] After this trilogy, the author dedicated further studies to the satirical landscape of the country, resulting in several specific

[30] Turgut Çeviker, *Gelişim Sürecinde Türk Karikatürü 1. Tanzimat ve İstibdat Dönemi 1867-1878* (Istanbul, 1986), Turgut Çeviker, *Gelişim Sürecinde Türk Karikatürü 2. Meşrutiyet Dönemi 1908-1918* (Istanbul, 1988) and Turgut Çeviker, *Gelişim Sürecinde Türk Karikatürü 3. Kurtuluş Savaşı Dönemi 1918-1923* (Istanbul, 1991).

collections.[31] Most recently, his commitment to the history of Turkey's cartoons was accompanied by a history of Turkey *in* cartoons, which addresses a general audience and thus holds the merit of bringing the general public closer to this art form.[32]

Çeviker's trilogy was later followed by comprehensive works by other authors, who all contributed to the field in different ways. Some enriched the study of Turkey's satirical tradition by examining not only its graphic expressions but also their written counterparts, like the architect and researcher of cartoons Üstün Alsaç, who offered an account of caricatures and comic strips as well as texts and ongoing stories in his *Türkiye'de Karikatür, Çizgi Roman ve Çizgi Film*.[33] Some others approached the history of Turkey's cartoons from specific perspectives, like the journalist and historian Orhan Koloğlu, who looks at satirical illustrations as artistic expressions – with their waves and trends, in the already mentioned *Türkiye Karikatür Tarihi* (footnote 8).[34]

Moreover, an interesting trend, and one that may be peculiar to Turkey and a few other countries, is that the most passionate researchers of graphic satire are often cartoonists themselves. Starting from Turhan Selçuk who began to study Western cartoon traditions in the 1950s, and up to Cihan Demirci and Tan Oral today (see footnote 9), Turkish cartoonists have written about their craft extensively. Usually their efforts have resulted in short essays and articles, which differ from those of cartoon experts and other scholars insofar as they offer insights into the technicalities of this art form, as well as reporting on its artistic, editorial and political context with a level expertise that only practitioners can have. Nonetheless, some cartoonists have also authored more complex works, some of which have become milestones in the field. This is especially true for the already-mentioned Ferit Öngören's *Cumhuriyet'in 75 yılında Türk Mizahı ve Hicvi* (see footnote 9).[35]

The names and profiles mentioned so far have two features in common. One, they all operated and were published in Turkey (and in Turkish). The other is the chronological criterion that guided their analyses. In fact, all these studies engage in the evolution of the satirical genre in time, though some of them start from the foundation of the republic while others include also the late Ottoman era.

[31] For example Turgut Çeviker, *Karikatür Üzerine Yazılar* (Istanbul, 1997).
[32] Turgut Çeviker, *Karikatürkiye. Karikatürlerle Cumhuriyet Tarihi. 1923-2008* (Istanbul, 2010).
[33] Üstün Alsaç, *Türkiye'de Karikatür, Çizgi Roman ve Çizgi Film* (Istanbul, 1994).
[34] Orhan Koloğlu, *Türkiye Karikatür Tarihi* (Istanbul, 2005).
[35] Ferit Öngören, *Cumhuriyet'in 75 yılında Türk Mizahı ve Hicvi* (Istanbul, 1998).

By contrast, a different approach dominates the studies that developed outside Turkey. The chronological line is generally abandoned in favour of thematic perspectives that shed light on specific aspects and representations.

The best examples of this trend are found in the Turkish studies tradition of France, particularly with the historian François Georgeon, independent researcher Etienne Copeaux, and former European Commission adviser Alain Servantie. Georgeon has explored the shift from traditional empire to modern nation state through the satirical production of the late Ottoman and early republican periods, and has published extensively on humour in the Ottoman Empire, female representations in early Turkish cartoons, and gendered satirical gazes.[36] Copeaux, instead, has investigated the caricatured representations of Turkey's map as a gauge of Turkish nationalism, and looked at the shifting definition of the latter according to the different political challenges that the country faced at various times.[37] Servantie has instead worked on the mutual caricatured representations of the Ottoman Empire and European powers. A similar research question, though with a different timeframe, also guided his more recent project on the past fifty years of relations between Turkey and the EU, which translated into an exhibition and catalogue of satirical illustrations on this subject.[38]

New horizons and fruitful research paths were open also beyond the French school. Let us mention in particular the Anglo-Saxon case with the sociologist Fatma Müge Göçek, who proposes a transnational and comparative approach in her volume *Political Cartoons in the Middle East*, which places the Turkish case in a broader study on graphic satire in the Middle Eastern region.[39] Included in Göçek's volume is also Ayhan Akman's article, which discusses the representation of "Turkishness" in cartoons through details such as costume, architecture, interior design, social spaces, and products of material consumption.[40]

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[36] François Georgeon, "Rire dans l'Empire ottoman?" *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée* No. 77-78, (1995): 89-109, Irène Fenoglio and François Georgeon, "Humour et Orient," *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire* No. 47, (July-September 1995): 200-201, and François Georgeon, "Womens' Representations in the Ottoman Cartoons and the Satirical Press on the Eve of the Kemalist Reforms (1919-1924)", in *A Social History of Late Ottoman Women: New Perspectives*, ed. Duygu Köksal and Anastassia Falierou (Leiden and Boston, 2013), pp. 249-277.

[37] Etienne Copeaux, "*Haritatür*. La carte géographique dans la caricature turque", (Istanbul, 1997).

[38] Alain Servantie, "Les Turcs, entre l'exotisme du désir et l'angoisse de l'interdit dans les bandes dessinées", *Quaderns de la Meditarrània* No. 8, (2007): 157-168, Alain Servantie, "Le Turc dans la Caricature du XIX^{e} siècle: l'homme malade, le bachi-bozouk et le démantèlement du harem", courtesy of the author, and Various Artists, *"Uzun, Ince Bir Yol" Karikatürlerle Türkiye-AB Iliskileri / "A Long and Winding Road" Turkey-EU Relations Through Cartoons / "Une Route Longue et Sinueuse" Les Relations Entre la Turquie et l'UE à travers les Dessins de Presse* (Istanbul, 2012).

[39] Fatma Müge Göçek, ed., *Political Cartoons in the Middle East* (Princeton, 1998).

[40] Ayhan Akman, "From Cultural Schizophrenia to Modernist Binarism: Cartoons and Identities in Turkey (1930-1975)", in *Political Cartoons in the Middle East*, ed. Fatma Müge Göçek (Princeton, 1998), pp. 83-131.

Notwithstanding extensive publications on Turkish satire, its existence during the years of military rule is still largely overlooked. In the majority of studies, the regime is quickly mentioned as the period of rule that introduced the strictest censorship ever experienced in modern Turkey, which consequently ended the prolific satirical tradition of the previous decades, causing the decline of this art. It is regrettable that, with this idea in mind, very little work has been done on post-1980 satire. The examples speak for themselves: the already mentioned article by Akman accounts for cartoons that were produced up until 1975, and works investigating the cartoons of modern Turkey take 1980 as the last year of their timeframe even though they were written much later, as in the case of Ahmet Sipahioğlu's *Türk Grafik Mizahı 1923-1980*, which was published in 1999.[41]

The tendency to underrate the production of the 1980s by insisting on the fact that during the military regime satire lost its momentum is also evident in studies that specifically explore post-1980 cartoons, like Aslı Tunç's *Beyond the Line: The Situation of Editorial Cartoonists as a Press Freedom Issue between 1980-2000 in Turkey*[42] and M. Bilal Arık's *Değişen Toplum Değişen Karikatür. 1980'den sonra yaşanan toplumsal değişim ve karikatürün değişen işlevi*.[43] The latter goes as far as declaring that satirical magazines, including *Gırgır*, promoted a highly apolitical satire until 1986, inexplicably attributing the features that characterised the very first *Gırgır*, namely a humour based on sexual connotations, to its satirical line of the next decade too.[44]

In brief, despite the presence of praiseworthy studies that, indeed, provide the ground for any researcher of the satirical tradition of Turkey, the production of the years 1980 to 1983 remains mostly unexplored. The main reason for this neglect appears to be rooted in a generalisation that takes for granted that the regime was too repressive for political satire to survive in the mainstream media. We may refer to this general assumption as "the 1980 prejudice". This is precisely the prejudice that the thesis aims to break.

As far as the specific historiography of *Gırgır* is concerned, the magazine has been the subject of a great deal of short articles since the early 1980s, especially by cartoonists[45] and

[41] Ahmet Sipahioğlu, *Türk Grafik Mizahı 1923-1980* (Izmir, 1999).
[42] Aslı Tunç, *Beyond the Line. The Situation of Editorial Cartoonists as a Press Freedom Issue between 1980-2000 in Turkey* (Saarbrücken, 2010).
[43] M. Bilal Arık, *Değişen Toplum Değişen Karikatür. 1980'den sonra yaşanan toplumsal değişim ve karikatürün değişen işlevi* (Istanbul, 1998).
[44] Id., pp. 102-103.
[45] For example Ferit Öngören, "Gırgır Olayı," *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* Vol. 6 (1984), or Cihan Demirci, "Mizah dergiciliğimizdeki 'Gırgır' gerçeği," *MiniDEV* (13 March 2004).

cartoon experts, among which Levent Çantek[46] and the already mentioned Çeviker.[47] More recently, the passing of *Gırgır* creator and editor Oğuz Aral in 2004 encouraged longer publications,[48] which, however, are mostly the recollections and memoirs of artists who contributed to the magazine in the past, rather than academic works. At the scholarly level, *Gırgır* often appears in the studies of graphic satire discussed above. Sometimes it is briefly debated along with other satirical magazines, while, on other occasions, it is discussed in greater depth, like in the case of the work by Arık. Nevertheless, as Arık's passage reported above already shows, *Gırgır* tends to suffer from the 1980 prejudice that affects the satirical genre more broadly. In addition, all these accounts frequently provide contrasting information. These discrepancies confirm what the prejudice already reveals, which is that a thorough investigation is evidently needed.

A remarkable exception to this general trend is Ferhat Kentel's *La société turque entre totalitarisme et démocratie. Etude de la transformation des intellectuels révolutionnaires et Islamistes.*[49] This doctoral thesis, which discusses the role of Turkey's intellectuals as social and political actors, recognises graphic satire as a genre that successfully reacted to the totalitarianism of the 1970s and 1980s, and identifies *Gırgır* as its best example. This work constitutes the only detailed political reading of *Gırgır* and, as such, has been a guiding light for my research. It is indeed regrettable that it remained unpublished, for it could have paved the way for a different understanding of totalitarianism, graphic satire, and *Gırgır*. To some extent, this thesis develops from what Kentel had begun to assert back then.

Theoretical framework

The historiographic trend that frames this thesis is cultural history, in particular the so-called new cultural history, which, in recent years, has brought significant innovations to the

[46] To mention a few, Levent Çantek, "Sarı Sayfalarda Muhalefet," *Birikim Dergisi* No. 60, (April 1994): pp. 78-88, Levent Çantek, "Popüler Mizah Dergileri Tarihçesine Giriş," *Karikatür Aylık Mizah Dergisi* Year 3, No. 27, (June 1995), and Levent Çantek, "*Gırgır* Efsanesine Dışarıdan Bakmak," *Toplumsal Tarih Dergisi* No. 129, (September 2004): pp. 16-23.

[47] Let us mention Turgut Çeviker, "Bir Mizah Dergisi," *Karikatür* No. 1, (1983) and Turgut Çeviker, "Oğuz Aral'ın Tutuklu Kadrosu!" (1986) in *Karikatür Üzerine Yazılar*, ed. Turgut Çeviker (Istanbul, 1997), pp. 300-302.

[48] For instance Murat Kürüz, *Son Efsane Gırgır* (Istanbul, 2007).

[49] Ferhat Kentel, *La société turque entre totalitarisme et démocratie. Etude de la transformation des intellectuels révolutionnaires et Islamistes*. Doctoral thesis defended at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, 1989. Courtesy of the author.

historical discipline by opening up new important research paths and methods. One of them has institutionalised the study of visual sources as historical evidence and was, indeed, the point of departure of this thesis. In *Eyewitnessing: The Use of Images as Historical Evidence* Peter Burke[50] discusses the opportunities and challenges of visual material for the historian, starting from the claim that "images allow us to 'imagine' the past more vividly".[51] Burke explores the revealing potential of art, and, most importantly, he raises awareness of the possible mistakes that are at play in the historical analysis of visual sources. His examination of different analytical techniques for varied material belonging to different geographic areas and eras converges on four concluding remarks of a general nature. These are, first, that images do not reveal reality, rather specific contemporary views of it. And in these views lie the authors' intentions, which may range from idealisation to satire, which the historian must learn to discern. Second, that the image as witness shall be placed in its wider multiple contexts, among which include the political, material, cultural, and artistic contexts. In assessing the latter, the historian should consider, among other aspects, the interests of the artist, those of the possible client, and, not least, the intended function of the work. Third, to assess a multitude of images instead of only a few or even just one is likely to provide a more reliable account of the subject. And, fourth, the historian should read between the lines and look at the details, both those that are visible and those that are absent, as these may reveal information or assumptions that even the artist was not necessarily aware of holding.

Burke's perspective, however illuminating, presents a limit to my research, namely the one of considering images that in the great majority of the cases were not conceived to explicitly take a stand or express an opinion. In other words, even though Burke's four considerations certainly apply to the historical study of satirical illustrations, too, his elaboration does not consider certain dynamics that are peculiar to graphic satire.

A contribution in this direction comes from Ludmilla Jordanova, who also accounts for this genre in her essays on the historical function of images. In *Image Matters,*[52] Jordanova discusses seven major historical approaches to visual material by examining the same number of published works. She notes that graphic satire, in particular the satirical print, "holds a special appeal for historians because it appears, if I may put it this way, outward looking, in responding to current events and gossip and in providing [...] references that help

[50] Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Use of Images as Historical Evidence* (Ithaca, 2001).
[51] Id., p. 13.
[52] Ludmilla Jordanova, "Image Matters", *The Historical Journal* Vol. 51, No. 3, (2008): pp. 777-791.

situate it".[53] The author also warns about the internal complexity of satirical prints and, concerning images in general, insists on the importance of elements such as the contexts of production (techniques, training, markets, social relations) and the role of the audiences as factors that historians need to consider in their research.

A historian whom Jordanova mentions on several occasions and who was particularly inspiring for this thesis is Mark Hallett. His *The Spectacle of Difference: Graphic Satire in the Age of Hogarth*[54] deals with graphic satire in Britain in the first half of the 18th century. Despite having a clearly different focus from my research, this work is an extraordinary example of a rich and articulated analysis that goes beyond traditional readings of satirical prints, proposing new interpretations of their meanings and success, hence of the period that they represent. In particular, in a chapter dedicated to the print series *A Harlot's Progress* by William Hogarth, Hallett analyses the "matrix of representations" of the prints, as he defines it,[55] proposing a re-reading of the series that ultimately sheds light on new aspects of Hogarth's era and on the cultural milieu in which he established his reputation. The aspect of Hallett's work that has been the most important for this thesis is its interpretative framework, which puts forward several levels of analysis, first taking into account the content and details of each plate and then considering the series as a whole, while always drawing links with the context in which the series was produced and circulated.

The interpretation of graphic satire as historical evidence takes on another dimension when it is studied in relation to power. This is especially true in the case of authoritarian rule and dictatorships. As a matter of fact, the hybrid nature of the satirical genre, its fluid identity, as Ernst Hans Gombrich put it,[56] poses a significant challenge to the definition of a theoretical framework for the study of this peculiar relation, and scholars are still struggling to formulate one that may be valid in different political, geographical, temporal, linguistic, and cultural contexts. An incomplete yet noteworthy attempt in this respect was proposed in an issue of the interdisciplinary journal *Mots. Les langages du politique*, which was entirely dedicated to political satire.[57] Here the contributors adapted Charles Tilly's concept of the repertoire of collective action to the production of satire, interpreting the proliferation of specific jokes and other satirical expressions in certain political contexts as part of the repertoire of symbolic

[53] Id., p. 784.
[54] Mark Hallett, *The Spectacle of Difference: Graphic Satire in the Age of Hogarth* (New Haven and London, 1999).
[55] Id., ch. 3.
[56] Ernst Hans Gombrich, *Meditations on a Hobby Horse. And other Essays on the Theory of Art* (Oxford, 1963).
[57] *Mots. Les langages du politique* No. 48, (1996).

action, and thus as forms of symbolic protest.[58] The very general nature of this approach constitutes its strength, since it makes it valid for a multitude of case studies (as the diversified articles within the issue testify), but also its weakness, as it fails to go deeper into the mechanisms of satire vis-à-vis power and vice versa.

Considering the broad historiography on the subject, it seems that what is lacking in this theorisation may be found more easily in existing historical enquiries about graphic satire and power, than in other theoretical attempts. In other words, the studies that have put the relationship between the satirical genre and power at the core of their investigation so far often provide valuable examples, both for their approach and structure. A number of them were models for this thesis as much as Hallett's was for the adoption of graphic satire as historical evidence in more general terms.

One of these works is *The Satiric Decade: Satire and the Rise of Republicanism in France, 1830-1840* by Amy Wiese Forbes,[59] who analyses satire as an element of political culture, tracing its active role as a model of political participation. A similar approach to Wiese Forbe's is also evident in studies that are closer to this thesis, namely studies on satire under military regimes in the Middle East and North Africa. In this respect, one particular work, though relatively short and published while this thesis was already in progress, immediately became important for this research – perhaps due to the certain academic affinity I feel with its author as a member of the Italian school of Middle Eastern studies. The work in question is Barbara De Poli's *Dal dissenso alla rivoluzione: satira e potere nel mondo arabo contemporaneo,*[60] which discusses various forms of satire under the authoritarian regimes of the Middle East and North Africa from the early 2000s to the most recent Arab Revolts. De Poli explores the paths of dissent that emerge from satire, examining first the (satirical) representations of politics and politicians, and then discussing the political functions of satire during revolution, which she identifies as delegitimising power, dispelling fear, and mobilising the masses. The author analyses both satirical expressions and attempts by those in power to silence them, revealing the fundamental role of satire as a vehicle of opposition and privileged form of freedom of expression.

My approach to graphic satire as an active agent of political participation owes much to this scholarship, and, overall, this thesis is deeply informed by all these studies.

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[58] Christian Delporte, Vincent Milliot and Erik Neveu, "Présentation", *Mots. Les langages du politique* No. 48, (1996): p. 12.
[59] Amy Wiese Forbes, *The Satiric Decade: Satire and the Rise of Republicanism in France, 1830-1840* (Lanham, 2010).
[60] Barbara De Poli, "Dal dissenso alla rivoluzione: satira e potere nel mondo arabo contemporaneo", *Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea* No. 11, (October 2012).

Sources and methodology

This thesis is mainly based on two types of sources: satirical illustrations and interviews conducted with a varied mix of social, cultural and political actors.

Visual sources

As far as the visual sources are concerned, a preliminary stage of this research entailed a panoramic look at a sample of print media that is much wider than the one on which the present analysis is actually based. I examined the weekly satirical magazines *Gırgır* and *Fırt* (Drag), and the daily newspapers *Cumhuriyet* (Republic), *Hürriyet* (Freedom) and *Tercüman* (Interpreter), in order to study satirical illustrations both in their most natural "habitat" (satirical magazines) and in their second most common space, namely the daily press. The first parameter that guided the choice of the sources was high circulation, insofar as, in all likelihood, their popularity put these media in a position of high visibility in terms of scrutiny by the regime, a condition of vital importance in the assessment of their relationship with the authoritarian government. The second criterion was political diversity. With the aim of encompassing a wide spectrum of political stands, the newspapers I selected were staunch secularist (*Cumhuriyet*), nationalist leaning mainstream (*Hürriyet*) and nationalist conservative (*Tercüman*). Concerning the magazines, I opted for one targeting more markedly social matters (*Fırt*) and one with a stronger political identity (*Gırgır*).

A sample for each of these five titles was explored considering the production of the 1970s and 1980s, privileging issues that were published during crucial political moments for the country and, it goes without saying, more regularly for the three years of military rule. The pages of the issues selected were scanned for satirical images, and columns too. This preliminary phase unveiled a pattern of, on the one hand, discontinuous, implicit, or moderate satire in the case of *Fırt* and the three newspapers and, on the other, a rich, varied, conflictual and continuously strong satirical imprint in *Gırgır*. This outcome led to the decision to adopt the latter as a unique case study. As a consequence, the following step was finding the *Gırgır* issues released under the regime that I had not considered initially, so as to begin with the examination of the full collection for the period September 1980 to December 1983. The choice of focusing exclusively on *Gırgır* implied giving up a broader reconstruction of the satirical landscape of the time, which would have emerged, instead, from a comparison of the

five titles initially considered; nonetheless, the advantage of this radical selection is that it allowed for greater analytical precision. In fact, close "textual" analysis is a defining feature of this thesis.

The sources mentioned so far were collected in Turkey, entirely from Istanbul. The fieldwork started in the city on the Bosphorus for two reasons. First, it is in Istanbul that the headquarters of the five papers were based (and still are, in the case of the publications that survive today, namely *Cumhuriyet*, *Hürriyet* and *Gırgır*). And, second, the satirical scene is historically more lively there than anywhere else in the country. Thus, it became clear that the presence of major archives and libraries in Istanbul would have made research in the capital or elsewhere unnecessary.

Consulting the three newspapers was relatively easy as their issues are preserved in multiple archives, which compensate each other in case of partially missing collections. The ones that proved most useful in this case are the Atatürk Library and the Beyazıt State Library.

Concerning the two satirical magazines, the research turned out to be more complicated. The only archive that preserves the entire *Fırt* and *Gırgır* collection of the 1970s and 1980s is the Center (formerly Museum) of Cartoons and Humour. This is a space entirely dedicated to the cartoon tradition of Turkey, consisting of a permanent collection, a space for temporary exhibitions, a library, and an archive. However, at the time of starting the fieldwork, the museum (with its library and archive) was temporarily closed due to the restoration of the historical building that has housed the museum since 1989 – the Gazanferağa Madrasa in the district of Fatih. In fact, the former madrasa was included in the massive restoration project launched in the framework of the Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture programme.

Initially, the fate of the museum was not clear. No one at the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, the sponsor of the museum, or at the Association of Cartoonists, which manages it, was able to establish how long the restoration of the former madrasa would take, nor to confirm whether the museum would be reopened there. On another occasion I was told that it would be assigned to a new location; still, no details about when and where were offered. Later, the Municipality opted to move it to a different building and neighbourhood, but the date of the opening kept being postponed. Nonetheless, once all the materials were actually moved to the new building, the Association kindly granted me a special permit to access the archive and work in the library. So, I was finally able to access the material – with a delay

that was relatively short compared to the official reopening of the Museum (renamed Center on that occasion).

Besides the Atatürk Library, the Beyazıt State Library, and the Center, other libraries and archives were consulted at times for specific documents. Useful collections were found at the Research Center for Anatolian Civilization, Istanbul Research Institute, French Institute for Anatolian Studies, Orient-Institut, and SALT Research. In some cases, libraries and archives that initially looked very promising proved to be of no use after a thorough consultation. This was particularly true for the collection at the Press Museum.

There is a category of cartoons included in this study, linked to and partially included in *Gırgır*, for which studying the pages of the magazine proved insufficient. These are what I refer to in the following chapters as "prison cartoons", that is to say illustrations made by political prisoners of the regime during their detention. Although part of this corpus was published on the pages of *Gırgır* throughout the military triennium, about two thirds were not printed in the magazine. Unwilling to assess such a crucial category of cartoons based only on a small selection, I strove to access to the entire collection in order to gain an exhaustive understanding of their narrative, messages and complexity. Thankfully, in 1986 these works were displayed together in an exhibition, which was opened to the public along with a catalogue that, although small and poor in terms of paper quality, reproduced the majority of these works. Finding a copy of this catalogue proved harder than expected since no shop, library, nor archive seemed to have a copy of it; nor, surprisingly, did the Center. Finally, thanks to the perseverance and meticulous investigations of a trusted *sahaf* (second-hand book dealer) I found a private owner willing to sell me his copy.

A clarification might be necessary with regard to the degree of originality of the sources accessed. The archival research for the three newspapers and the two magazines was based on original printed issues, in other words on editions of *Cumhuriyet*, *Hürriyet*, *Tercüman*, *Fırt* and *Gırgır* that were collected for the archives at the time of their publication, hence they are exactly the ones that were available to the readership at the time of their release on the market. Access to the original hand-drawn sketches, that is to say the prototypes made by the cartoonists, was not a goal in the preliminary phase of the research. Later on, when my research concentrated on the years of military rule and *Gırgır* in greater detail, I wished to access some original drawings in order to detect any possible intervention in the final products that appeared in the publications (in relation to the original creations). This concern arose from the fact that the office of the owner of the media group to which

Gırgır belonged was only one floor away from the rooms where the magazine was being produced, thus this short physical distance could have easily encouraged interference in the production, at times, to avoid any negative consequences with the regime.

In any case, comparing the originals and the published versions remained an unfulfilled ambition because the original works of the first two decades of *Gırgır* are not available to the public, assuming that they still exist. In fact, in 1989 the magazine underwent a tumultuous change of ownership, tumultuous insofar as *Gırgır* was sold without the knowledge of the artists who worked for it, including Aral who, as explained above, was at the same time its creator and editor. This turn of events prompted Aral and other members of the staff to resign overnight. The artists claimed ownership of their own original sketches, however this was in vain as all the original material that was published in or even only sent to *Gırgır* (as Chapter 2 explains, amateur and semi-amateur cartoonists from all over the country used to send in their illustrations in the hope of being published – including political prisoners, as mentioned above) was retained at the headquarters, including the work of the outgoing artists and the prison cartoons. Despite my repeated attempts to establish contact with the post-1989 management I was always confronted with silence; thus, I was left with no other option than to give up the search for the original sketches, and study the illustrations only from old printed issues of *Gırgır* and from the prison cartoon exhibition catalogue.

The Center turned out to be vital for my research not only for granting me access to the complete collection of *Gırgır* and *Fırt* but also for a number of other reasons. To begin with, the rich collection of humour and satirical magazines from the late Ottoman era to the 2000s that is preserved in the archive allowed me to analyse my case study in relation to the wider satirical tradition of the country, hence to place it in its wider cultural, artistic and historical context. In the second place, it might be obvious yet it is worth stating that the permanent collection displayed in the museum, which retraces Turkey's caricature tradition through its most important examples, allowed me to examine at close hand the illustrations that made the history of cartoons in the country and that researchers usually only have the opportunity to view as small reproductions in scholarly books. Moreover, the Association, having inherited the private collections of some cartoon artists who had passed away, makes them available to the public through the Center's library, which thus allowed me to browse the collections of some of the greatest names of Turkish cartoons, such as Ferruh Doğan, Nehar Tüblek and Semih Balcıoğlu. And to conclude, frequenting the Center was the starting

point to establish essential contacts in the world of cartoons. These contacts paved the way to the majority of my interviews, which constitute the second main source of this study.

Oral sources

Fieldwork based on oral sources was not initially conceived as a major part of this research, but it became as important as the illustrations themselves in disclosing information that neither the cartoons nor other studies were able to provide, reconstructing a general picture of the three years of the regime.

I interviewed professional cartoonists that had been in the cartoon industry since before the 1980 coup, as well as the wife one of Turkey's most famous political cartoonists, namely the late Turhan Selçuk. As far as *Gırgır* is directly concerned, unfortunately, Aral, who definitely knew the magazine better than anyone else, passed away a few years before the beginning of this research. However, I interviewed a number of people involved the magazine; namely, cartoonists who joined the team in the period considered by this study; the secretary of *Gırgır*, who was the only non-cartoonist working there and, as such, was in charge of everything that was not strictly related to drawing or writing satire (i.e. accounting, payments, relation with the readership); and Aral's son, who was only a child at that time but used to spend time at the headquarters of *Gırgır* and has himself become a cartoonist, perhaps unsurprisingly. Furthermore, I established contact with five former prison cartoonists.

These encounters contributed to my understanding of a number of questions, among which the relationship between cartoons and censorship, the line of the Association during the years of military rule, the organisation of *Gırgır* and, more generally, the impact of the regime on satire. In particular, the interviews proved of the utmost importance in revealing mechanisms of censorship, which would have probably remained largely uncovered otherwise. For, although before starting the fieldwork I had hoped to access archives, registers or reports of the junta stating forbidden words and topics, I soon came to realise that, on the contrary, no such lists existed, and that bans and censorship were applied for arbitrary reasons and often through phone calls to the magazines, thus leaving no written record. The cartoonists themselves were thus the most reliable witnesses in this respect.

My selection of interviewees was not limited to the sphere of cartoonists. I interviewed the already mentioned Çeviker, the highest authority on Ottoman and Turkish cartoons, the documentary movie director Çayan Demirel and the writer Nedim Gürsel, two artists outside

the realm of cartoons whose work is related to the regime in one way or another, as well as a few ordinary citizens with varied backgrounds (in terms of their age, gender, profession and city of residence during the military rule), political views, and memories of their experience of the regime. The various perceptions and anecdotes that emerged from these interviews added important nuances to the accounts of those years that are usually found in academic and journalistic articles.

A general problem that I detected with the interviews – and one that oral historians are highly familiar with – is reliability. In the case of my interviewees this took various forms, ranging from mere issues of memory, evolving emotions and political feelings towards the regime, and serious difficulty in processing the trauma that this experience left. It was not unusual to hear contradictory accounts from different interlocutors and, on some occasions, even from the same speaker at different times. In order to find a balance between accuracy and subjectivity I crosschecked the various accounts and opted to rely only on information that was confirmed at least by one additional witness.

Methodology

I have studied every issue of *Gırgır* from September 1980 to December 1983. Each issue has between twelve and sixteen pages (the number of pages increased progressively) and on average seventy satirical contributions, mainly graphic but also written. I have thus carefully analysed about 12,000 satirical illustrations and columns, applying a political reading with the goal of assessing the levels, modes, and strategies of criticism of the regime. In order to do so, I focused on aspects such as the nature of the satire, its agents, the social and political spheres represented, the targets of criticism, and the characters through which the targets were attacked.

What emerged was a clear distinction between humour and satire. The former is mainly embodied by comic series, which develop along plots that are detached from the contemporary situation of the country, thus these have only marginal importance for the thesis. This study concentrated, instead, on politically charged satire. I have categorised the latter along the political-social line, distinguishing examples of strictly political and social denunciation but also more nuanced cases of social issues that became political as a result of the military coup, and apparently social but actually deeply political themes. The still high number of relevant cases made it necessary to establish further boundaries within which to

articulate the analysis. Therefore, while the potential of all these social and political categories is only outlined (in Chapter 3), the main analysis revolves around the cases that proved most crucial for our research questions, that is to say the ones that address the military regime most explicitly and directly.

The analysis develops along thematic paths, rather than a temporal periodisation. The latter, which is very common in works on satire, was not deemed appropriate to elaborate on a period that is, first, relatively short, and, second, already framed as a historical and political phase itself. By contrast, the criteria adopted in the thesis are content-based, and group the illustrations under umbrella themes such as representations of the armed forces as rulers in the political arena (Chapter 4), as masterminds of repression (Chapter 5), and as soldiers on the battlefield (Chapter 6). Within each of these categories the thesis identifies subtopics and narratives, which are debated through the analysis of illustrative examples.

The political reading that led to the first broad categorisation of *Gırgır*'s contents (as apolitical, political and social) is once again what guides the analysis. At this stage the perspective is a magazine-regime-readership one, which accounts for what is portrayed and the variable meaning and message in relation to the intended audiences, including the junta. Each chosen illustration is deconstructed and interpreted considering the specific themes, aesthetic devices, rhetoric, and stereotypes that were adopted (and those that were not), bringing to the attention of the reader the most relevant details for my argument, in other words the ones that most contributed to political criticism.

The analyses and interpretations of the satirical illustrations are indeed essential to our argument; yet, the understanding of their weight at the time of their publication would not be complete without considering their passage through the cultural circuit theorised by Stuart Hall and Richard Johnson, constituted by the moments of production, circulation and consumption.

The identity of *Gırgır* – artistic, cultural, and political – is the first aspect that I considered with respect to the production. I investigated the birth of the magazine, its evolution in time, its role within the cartoon tradition of the country, and its contribution to the national satirical heritage both in terms of continuity with the past and innovation. Fundamental to the understanding of these aspects was the consultation of issues of *Gırgır* from its birth until September 1980, as well as of other satirical magazines predating the 1980 coup, like *Diyojen*, *Diken* (Thorn) and *Akbaba* (Vulture).

Next, although in the wide context of print media the magazine is an entity of its own (throughout the thesis I choose to refer to it as an active subject, i.e. *Gırgır* "narrates", "denounces", etc.), it is ultimately made by real agents. The cartoonists are the ones who actually define its identity and I considered them not merely as artists but as intellectuals in the Gramscian understanding of the term, in the light of my understanding of satire as a selective mirror of contemporary society, with its social and political issues. In other words, I approached the cartoonists as social and political actors who contest cultural hegemony with the satirical language, who are able to articulate the feelings and experiences of the people through their art. Tracing their political identity in relation to the magazine, how they became part of the team, and how their work was organised were important steps to assess the political action that guided their illustrations.

The majority of this information came from within the pages of *Gırgır*. In fact, the editorial staff was used to communicate with the readership quite extensively through messages, announcements, letters, and the amateur illustrations. These texts inside the magazine progressively revealed the behind the scenes of its production and organisation. In the case of prison cartoonists, then, their profile was retraced through the information provided by the preface and the captions included in the exhibition catalogue. Regarding the profile of both "free" and imprisoned cartoonists, the interviews completed the picture.

Lastly, the political context in which cartoonists operated clearly affected their production. This context was investigated in the newspapers of the time (besides secondary sources) with special attention being paid to the issues that were the object of louder debate and the ones that we find portrayed in the cartoons. Explanations of the events that inspired the satire frame the whole cartoon analysis.

The circulation of the cartoons that are object of the thesis obviously took place through *Gırgır*. Through the interviews I investigated possible exhibitions and other events that could have brought these illustrations to the public in other ways; however, there was no evidence of this for the years of the regime, due to the difficulties derived by the political situation. In the light of this outcome, the interviews further explored the question of dissemination by concentrating exclusively on the policies of distribution of the magazine.

As far as consumption is concerned, I researched the targeted audience primarily through the cartoons, since illustrations often contain implicit references to their intended viewer. In addition, I carefully examined the points of contact between the editorial staff and the readership within the magazine (letters, comments, amateur illustrations, and short stories), which were quite frequent, as already mentioned. This virtual correspondence

between the editorial board and the readers, the latter addressed sometimes individually and sometimes collectively, revealed interesting information about the public and how it responded to the magazine. Obviously, more general indicators like distribution and sales data were considered too. By comparison, the reception by the regime proved harder to assess for, as already mentioned, no official document exists in this respect. Nevertheless, to investigate the attempts of the military government to hamper *Gırgır* allowed me to formulate an evaluation of, on the one hand, topics that were off-limits and, on the other, crucial yet tolerated discourses.

Thesis overview

The thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the political regime, explaining the social, political and economic factors that paved the way for the military intervention, and assessing its impact in general on the fields considered in this study, namely culture, satire, and the media.

Chapter 2 presents *Gırgır* along the two-fold path of, on the one hand, its role within the Ottoman and Turkish tradition and, on the other, the features that distinguished it from all previous experiments with graphic satire in the country. By looking at the satire produced prior to *Gırgır*, the first part of the chapter offers a panoramic view of the history of the genre in Turkey. The merit of the second part, then, is to disclose the major mechanisms of production, circulation, and consumption of the magazine, introducing the first aspects of its political identity that will emerge more clearly in later chapters.

Chapter 3 looks at *Gırgır* during the years of the regime, introducing the contents of the issues published in the period concerned. To begin with, it discusses the political meaning of specific details and choices such as the title and the colours used. Afterwards, it explores the peculiar re-definition and understanding of political and social satire through examples of cartoons belonging to different categories along the political-social line. Finally, it accounts for the censorship and temporary closure of *Gırgır*, discussing the meaning, implications and reactions (of both the cartoonists and the readership) to this episode.

The last three chapters deal with the actual cartoon analysis and develop along the umbrella topics disclosed in the methodological section above. Thus, Chapter 4 engages with the political analysis of illustrations that target the army in their self-appointed role of politicians taking lead of the country, in other words their ruling performance. Through a

discussion of the caricaturisation of key political actors, this chapter retraces crucial moments, events, reforms, and changes that characterised the triennium, as well as their perception.

Chapter 5 examines the illustrations that shed light on the darkest aspect of the regime: repression. Starting from the cartoons that denounced the phenomenon of mass imprisonment, the analysis continues to explore the theme of detention and the moments that characterise life in prison, including violence and torture. It then concludes with illustrations that represent the effects of the prison experience on the victims after their release.

Lastly, Chapter 6 is entirely dedicated to the content of one comic strip mocking the military in their most natural environment, which is not the political arena but the battlefield, and which narrates the (mis)adventures of disastrous soldiers training in the barracks and fighting wars.

CHAPTER 1
THE 1970s, THE 1980 COUP AND THE MILITARY'S RISE TO POWER

Political and economic landscape

In the early 1970s, Turkey was undergoing a deep transformation. At the political level the early 1970s were a critical moment of transition. The decade was inaugurated by a military intervention on March 12 1971, a so-called "coup by memorandum" in which the chief of the General Staff and the commanders of the Army, Navy and Air Force issued a communiqué urging the government to take immediate action to resolve the country's growing political and social unrest. In fact, social movements of various forms had developed in Turkey since the early 1960s. As early as 1963, a diplomat serving at the Consulate General of the United States (US)[1] in Istanbul reported that:

> "[F]or the broad mass of urban students and professional middle class the opportunity for 'new blood' to replace old in the social elite is largely dependent on a change in national power relationships. Since there is little spiritual foundation for the present organization of society, since youth in particular are not deeply convinced that things must remain as they are, there is a tendency of some small but influential groups to believe in revolution as a positive good."[2]

On the wave of the worldwide protests of 1968, Turkish students and trade union movements became increasingly radical and active through demonstrations, strikes and boycotts. When these activities were organised inside universities and factories, demonstrations were swiftly suppressed by the police force and protests regularly ended in violence. In parallel to these locally defined protests, violence also erupted on the streets. On the extreme right, 1969 saw the birth of the Grey Wolves[3] – the youth wing of the ultra-nationalist neo-fascist *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (Nationalist Action Party, MHP), led by the

[1] Throughout the whole thesis, acronyms will be spelled out the first time that they are mentioned; the abbreviated version will be given in brackets. For the sake of consistency, this rule will also be applied to well-known acronyms (as in this case).
[2] Extract (p. 55) from the report by John E. Merriam titled "Spiritual Problems and Social Disorder in Istanbul", dated May 20, 1973. The full text is reproduced in Rıfat N. Bali, *Turkey in the 1960's and 1970's. Through the Reports of American Diplomats* (Istanbul, 2010), 54-66.
[3] The official name of the organisation was *Ülkü Ocakları* (Hearths of the Ideal), but it came to be known as *Bozkurtlar* (Grey Wolves), as its members used to call themselves.

retired Colonel Alpaslan Türkeş. The Grey Wolves was organised along military lines and were trained to attack trade unionists, left-wing students and members of the *Türkiye İşçi Partisi* (Workers' Party of Turkey, TİP). On the radical left, 1969 witnessed the first spate of bank robberies, kidnappings and attacks – targeting US officials in particular.[4] Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel, of the right-wing *Adalet Partisi* (Justice Party, AP), did not appear keen to take a firm position against violence;[5] and, while he hesitated, the Grey Wolves worked undisturbed and leftist movements attracted an increasing number of members. On June 15 and 16, 1970, the streets of Istanbul saw the biggest workers' protest in the history of Turkey.[6] As the US Ambassador James Spain observed, "the June 15-16 riots, borne out of frustration, anger, heat and inevitable leftist agitation, were more than riots. In some ways, they were an up-rising which involved the have-nots against the haves."[7] The situation had become deadlocked and nothing was done to resolve it over the following months. The intervention of March 12 1971 was the ultimate step of the military to unlock it.[8]

Demirel resigned in the wake of the coup and Nihat Erim, from the leading opposition party, was advised by the National Security Council[9] to resign from the *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (Republican People's Party, CHP) and form a so-called "neutral", "technocratic" and "above-party" government. The new "above party" prime minister formed a technocratic cabinet that received a vote of confidence in parliament; thus, starting from March 26, the country was ruled by a military-backed government. Erim's administration did not last long and the following months saw a succession of weak prime ministers; but the cabinets under the military authority lasted until October 14 1973, when elections were held and the multi-party system was restored.

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[4] For an overview of left- and right-wing movements and extremist groups see Jacob M. Landau, *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey* (Leiden, 1974), Igor Lipovski, *The Socialist Movement in Turkey 1960-1980* (Leiden, 1992), and Anonymous, *Kontr-Gerilla ve MHP* (Istanbul, 1978). The latter, published by the Maoist-oriented press Aydınlık, may not be deemed a neutral and objective source; it is nonetheless useful for its careful description of the organisation of right-wing radical groups.

[5] Demirel was concerned about disappointing (and losing) his electorate by hindering a rightist movement. In the words of the US Ambassador Bill Handley, in a report entitled "The Far Right in Current Turkish Affairs" (p. 143), Demirel was "caught between his desire to permit freedom of expression and his dependence on rightist votes on the one hand and, on the other, the potentialities for serious trouble that are inherent in the existence of extremism." For the full report "The Far Right in Current Turkish Affairs", dated August 8, 1969, see Rıfat N. Bali, *Turkey in the 1960's and 1970's. Through the Reports of American Diplomats* (Istanbul, 2010), 143-152.

[6] The protest was against the changes in the legislation of the Trade Union Law that would limit the freedom to choose a union.

[7] The statement is included in a report written by the ambassador on September 24, 1970 and titled "Istanbul – Summer 1970". In Rıfat N. Bali, 156-166, 157.

[8] For a detailed account of the 1971 coup see İsmail Cem İpekçi, *12 Mart* (Istanbul, 1972).

[9] The National Security Council comprised the Chief of the General Staff, select members of the Council of Ministers, and the President of the Republic, who is also the Commander-in-chief. By 1971 the Council was heavily influenced by the military.

The country was undergoing profound changes at the socio-economic level, too. Starting with the aid granted by the Marshall Plan (1947) and thanks to the successful economic policies adopted since 1961, Turkey experienced steady economic growth until the mid-1970s (though not without important periods of crisis in the years 1957-1960 and 1969-1970, which actually contributed to the first military interventions, in 1960 and 1971).[10] This factor originated two significant trends. One was the staggering demographic rise that saw the population increasing from 27 million to 45 million in a few years;[11] the other was mass migration from rural areas to towns and cities.

The pattern of migration usually started with temporary stays in the cities for seasonal work, followed by permanent relocations. Villagers migrated above all for economic reasons. First, the mechanisation of agriculture had dramatically reduced the demand for workforce; second, the fragmentation (and thus reduction) of lands throughout generations had made agriculture an inadequate means of survival; moreover, industrialisation and the public sector inevitably attracted job seekers; and, finally, although supply was not equated to demand and the majority of urbanised villagers would not manage to successfully integrate into the economy of the city, the quality of urban life was still perceived to be better than its rural counterpart.[12] Even by 1963, "exposed to increasing modernizing influences, the peasant no longer finds the world outside the narrow environment of his village so strange or forbidding and his increased acquaintanceship with this world has generated in the villager a desire to acquire many of its products, if not its ways."[13] By 1975, almost 40 per cent of the country's population lived in towns or cities.[14]

The towns and cities, however, were not able to absorb the steady flow of people arriving from the countryside; they were not able to integrate them in the labour market or to provide them with housing. The failure of this urbanisation, in which the new city dwellers found themselves isolated at the margins of city life, was evident in the "*gecekondu*

[10] An account with dates is presented in William Hale, *The Political and Economic Development of Modern Turkey* (London, 1981), 129-135.
[11] William Hale, *The Political and Economic Development of Modern Turkey* (London, 1981), 18.
[12] Frank Tachau, *Turkey. The Politics of Authority, Democracy, and Development* (New York, 1984), 148-149.
[13] Extract (p. 39) from the report by the US Consul General Kenneth A. Byrns titled "Village Trends", dated April 26, 1963. The full text is reproduced in Rıfat N. Bali, *Turkey in the 1960's and 1970's. Through the Reports of American Diplomats* (Istanbul, 2010), 39-53.
[14] Cf. table 1.4 in Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, *İstatistik Göstergeler 1923-2009* (Ankara, 2010), 6. These are also the years of Turkish migration to European countries, especially Germany but also Belgium, Britain, France, Holland and Switzerland. In 1962 Turkish workers in Germany numbered 13,000 while, by 1974, they had become 800,000. By the end of the 1970s, more that 2.5 million Turkish citizens had settled in European countries. Cf. www.tuik.gov.tr.

phenomenon". The word *gecekondu,* which literally means "built at night", refers to the type of houses in which these migrants settled once they arrived in the cities. Constructed with makeshift materials, they consisted of one or two rooms that were to house large families and were surrounded by a vegetable garden and a chicken run. They were not equipped with water, sanitary facilities or power, at least initially. More importantly, the *gecekondu* were built without permission, usually on public land that belonged to the municipality or the state. As they were illegal, they were built in a very short period (hence the name) in order to prevent the authorities from stopping them. Their illegal status also implied the negotiation of a kind of clientistic relationship with the local political notables.

The inhabitants of the *gecekondu* had usually migrated collectively, with relatives and neighbours, and settled together in the same area. Therefore, solidarity, which was indeed a fundamental factor every time the authorities wanted to demolish their dwellings, was based on blood and geographic ties. Ultimately, the *gecekondu* quarters reproduced the rural lifestyle and structure of the villages they had left.

Generally speaking, the *gecekondu* dwellers had a low literacy level, which significantly limited their employment opportunities. The majority of them found low-skilled poorly paid jobs in factories and building companies, or worked as porters, barbers, servants, housemaids, unauthorised taxi drivers, street vendors and shoeshines. For years, the state did not support the *gecekondu* settlements and governments passed bills to demolish them, and yet they also had "local patrons" who protected them; and whenever one of these shanty towns was demolished it was quickly rebuilt somewhere else. The *gecekondu* areas expanded until they became established towns within towns, with their own schools and mosques;[15] and with time, it even became possible for their inhabitants to buy the soil on which they had built their house and to obtain public services. By 1969, in the largest cities up to two thirds of the population lived in the *gecekondu*,[16] and by 1980 this amounted to 60 per cent of the urban population of the entire country.[17]

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[15] Actually, the political scientist Ersin Kalaycıoğlu has rightly observed that mosques and schools were among the first buildings to be built in a *gecekondu* area, for "no politician of the 1960s and the 1970s could consider demolishing a mosque or a school as good public relations." In Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *Turkish Dynamics: Bridge across Troubled Lands* (New York and Basingstoke, 2005), 120.

[16] It was 65% in Ankara, 45% in Istanbul and Adana, and 35% in Samsun, Izmir and Erzurum. Cf. table 9.5 in Michael N. Danielson and Ruşen Keleş, "Urbanization and Income Distribution in Turkey", in *The Political Economy of Income Distribution in Turkey*, ed. Ergun Özbudun and Aydın Ulusan (New York, 1980), 269-309, 273.

[17] Urbanization and the "*gecekondu* phenomenon" are analysed extensively in Kemal Karpat, *The Gecekondu: Rural Migration and Urbanization* (Cambridge, 1976), Mübeccel Kıray, ed., *Structural Change in Turkish Society* (Bloomington, 1991) and Neslihan Demirtaş and Seher Şen, "Varoş Identity: the Redefinition of Low Income Settlements in Turkey", *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol. 43, No. 1, (January 2007): 87-106.

A changing society

Turkey was also changing at the cultural level. The agents of this transformation were the mass media and, indeed, television above all. Throughout the 1970s black-and-white television became the most popular form of mass media, as well as a true status symbol that only a few could afford to own but everybody watched. The television changed people's daily habits and redefined social spaces. Men would watch the news and sporting events in public places like coffee houses, while women would gather at home to watch television programmes together with relatives and neighbours. In order to understand the frenzy that exploded around this commodity, it is worth quoting the following account by Kalaycıoğlu:

> "Those who owned the new status symbol suddenly discovered that they, or rather their TV sets, constituted a great attraction. Relatives, friends, and neighbors, who they had not had very close interactions, suddenly rushed to take their seats in front of the TV sets, in their now "beloved" relatives', friends', or neighbors' homes . . . Families even discovered relatives long out of touch with them, and friends from the past, such as those who had served in the same company in the army once upon a time, suddenly emerged from the shadows to reserve their seats in the living rooms for the TV séance."[18]

In this respect, the lives of the families that owned a television became integrated with those of their friends and neighbours: their houses were turned into semi-public places, habits like dining and leisure times were changed, and the family's privacy was invaded. But this was not the only way in which the television encouraged a violation of the private sphere. In fact, the television, and in general the mass media as sites for the promotion and elaboration of cultural norms, began to devote increasing attention to the lives of individuals, no longer seeing people as part of a collective community. The private affairs of well-known people, including their sexual orientation, were disclosed to the wide public; and topics such as homosexuality, bisexuality and transsexuality started to appear on the screen. However, they were not contextualised as social issues and eventually debated, but rather presented to the public for entertainment and as gossip, fuelling instead of fighting prejudices. To sum up, the

[18] Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *Turkish Dynamics: Bridge across Troubled Lands* (New York and Basingstoke, 2005), 118-119.

increasing consumption of mass media in the 1970s brought about a shift in interest of the general public, whether as spectators or as readers, toward the private.[19]

This was the socio-political context in which *Gırgır* gained ground.

The path to the 1980 coup

To a large extent, the military coup of September 12 1980 was connected to that of 1971. Actually, the interregnum of 1971-1973 had only temporarily solved the social and political problems that had thrown the country into chaos in the 1960s. Significantly, some of the factors that had sparked the 1980 intervention, namely political extremism and the rulers' inability to guarantee stability and order, echoed – in a louder way – those of the previous decade.

Political violence had re-emerged as soon as the country had returned to civilian government. During the 1971-1973 period, the military authorities had arrested, imprisoned, and in many cases tortured, not only people involved in radical activities but also students, academics, journalists and trade unionists who had allegedly embraced leftist ideologies. The efforts to repress political extremism had clearly concentrated on the left[20] and, contrary to the military's expectation, when CHP leader and Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit declared amnesty for political prisoners in 1974, many of them approached – or renewed their adherence to – trade unions and movements of various kinds. Also between 1974 and 1980 leftist movements were subject to harsher repression than their counterpart, for they had no official party affiliation, whereas the Grey Wolves enjoyed the protection of the MHP. In spite of that, left-wing groups increased not only in number but also in terms of radicalism, and the far right followed suit.

[19] Ayşe Saraçgil, *Il maschio camaleonte. Strutture patriarcali nell'Impero ottomano e nella Turchia moderna* (Milano, 2001), 289-290. For discussion of the socio-cultural impact of the media see Ahmet Oktay, *Toplumsal Değişme ve Basın* (Istanbul, 1987) and Nurdan Gürbilek, *Vitrinde Yaşamak* (Istanbul, 1993).

[20] The unequal treatment of radical leftist and rightist movements before and during the 1971-1973 period is widely acknowledged. For example, Clement Henry Dodd, professor of politics and an expert on Turkey, makes the point that just before the 1971 coup, although the militancy of leftist and rightist groups was "equally devastating to law and order" the members of the rightist faction were "described by the former general, then President, [Cevdet] Sunay, as 'patriotic youngsters'." See Clement Henry Dodd, *The Crisis of Turkish Democracy* (Huntingdon, 1990), 14. Besides, Erik Jan Zürcher, professor of Turkish studies, defines the two years of military-backed rule as "a veritable witch-hunt against anyone with leftist or even progressive liberal sympathies." See Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey. A Modern History* (London and New York, 2004), 259. See also Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *Turkish Dynamics: Bridge across Troubled Lands* (New York and Basingstoke, 2005), 106-107 and Andrew Mango, *The Turks Today* (London, 2004), 69-70.

What made it easier for both sides to attract new members were the severe economic crisis and widespread poverty that characterised the second half of the 1970s. The vulnerability of the Turkish economy, which depended largely on foreign inputs and had a persistent balance of payments deficit, became manifest following the oil crises of 1973-1974 and 1979-1980. In fact, the country largely depended on oil as a source of energy and the oil price shocks of those years heavily increased the import bill, which was to be paid in dollars. The foreign reserves of the Central Bank dropped rapidly and successive governments tried to prevent further losses by adopting incautious short-term policies, such as the agreement on inconvenient foreign loans and the printing of extra money. Predictably, inflation registered a dramatic rise, reaching 90 per cent. The failed attempts to decrease the inflation rate, through price control and a high exchange rate for the Turkish lira, had the immediate effect of fuelling the black market and large-scale smuggling. As late as January 1980, a drastic reform package was launched that would stabilise the economy and obtain new loans and credits from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).[21] However, it was too late to prevent the economic crisis from affecting the socio-political stability of the country.

A major effect of the economic crisis of the mid-1970s was that it shattered the urban dream of many who had migrated from rural areas in search of better living conditions. The flow of people that settled in towns and cities had steadily continued since the early 1960s and, by 1980, about 45 per cent of Turkey's population lived in an urban centre.[22] As already noted, the *gecekondu* dwellers usually found low skilled employment as gardeners, porters, servants or housekeepers. These jobs gave them access to middle- and upper-class houses, bringing rural and urban values face to face for the first time. The effect was devastating. As Kalaycıoğlu's explains: "cultural shock is not an intense enough term to explain such an intimate contact of two separate and diametrically opposite lifestyles and values."[23] It is true that these jobs gave immigrants the chance to experience wealth, but only at the margins, making them conscious of the fact that they would never attain those living standards. In other words, bourgeois lifestyle caused envy and resentment among the poorest strata.

Some people resigned themselves to their condition, while others took recourse to illegal jobs like smuggling, selling drugs and prostitution with the hope of improving their

[21] The dynamics of the economic crisis are carefully explained in Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey. A Modern History* (London and New York, 2004), 264-68.
[22] Cf. table 1.4 in Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, *İstatistik Göstergeler 1923-2009* (Ankara, 2010), 6.
[23] Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *Turkish Dynamics: Bridge across Troubled Lands* (New York and Basingstoke, 2005), 120.

financial condition faster. Whatever their differences, all of them became potential pawns in the hands of political groups of various natures and factions, leftist and rightist alike. In fact, on the one hand, politicians learnt to secure for themselves the vote of entire *gecekondu* areas in exchange for reclamation and infrastructures; on the other hand, terrorist groups established control by offering protection to *gecekondu* dwellers who joined their cause. The economic crisis of the mid-1970s encouraged loyalty to these groups, in the *gecekondu* neighbourhoods as well as among youth in general with few career prospects, fuelling large-scale political polarisation.

The economic crisis was not the only factor contributing to the political radicalisation; other crucial patterns, of generational, ethnic, class and religious nature, emerged too. One was that the cultural, ethnic and religious differences that had coexisted more or less peacefully until then and that had, one could argue, contributed to the spiritual richness of the country, assumed political connotations and became the roots for further violence. In 1978, Abdullah Öcalan, at that time a university student, founded the *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*[24] (Kurdistan Workers' Party, PKK), the neo-Marxist militant organisation – later defined as a terrorist organisation by the US, NATO and the European Union (EU) – that advocated Kurdish independence and aimed at the foundation of a socialist Kurdish state in the south-eastern region of Turkey.[25] In December of the same year, a pogrom organised by radical right militants against the Alevi community occurred in the south-eastern city of Kahramanmaraş. Alevis had traditionally sympathised with the political left, which was generally less inclined to support religious (Sunni, which was the predominant religious identity of the country) initiatives than right-wing parties.[26] Sunnis were mobilised against Alevis by the Grey Wolves, who instigated large-scale violence that caused over 100 deaths.[27] These events proved not only that diversity had become a weapon in the hands of extremist groups, but also that violence had crossed the boundaries of the major cities and reached urban centres that had not experienced political radicalism before.

[24] Kurdish original.
[25] For an investigation on the birth of Kurdish terrorism and the Kurdish question see İsmet G. İmset, *The PKK: a Report on Separatist Violence in Turkey* (Ankara, 1992) and Kemal Kirişçi and Gareth Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: an Example of a Trans-state Ethnic Conflict* (London and Portland, 1997).
[26] Ali Çarkoğlu, "Political Preferences of the Turkish Electorate: Reflections of an Alevi-Sunni Cleavage", *Turkish Studies* Vol. 6, No. 2, (June 2005): 273-292.
[27] For more on the accident and on the Alevis in general see David Shankland, *The Alevis in Turkey: the Emergence of a Secular Islamic Tradition* (London, 2003) and Paul J. White and Joost Jongerden, ed., *Turkey's Alevi Enigma* (Leiden and Boston, 2003).

Following these events, martial law was declared in 13 provinces[28] that were predominantly inhabited by Kurdish and Alevi communities. Declaring martial law was an unequivocal sign that the civilian authorities were not capable of restoring order without resorting to military action. As Kalaycıoğlu points out, not only was it an official admission of incapacity, but it also entrusted domestic affairs in the hands of the military. In other words, "the declaration of martial law provide[d] the military with a clear and legitimate ground to meddle into politics to put the political house in order. That constitutes a short step to a full-scale coup."[29] Moreover, this measure helped to restore order only partially, temporarily and in a limited area.

In January 1980, the military issued an ultimatum to the politicians calling for a solution to end the near-civil war that was paralysing the country. Conversely, the following months were characterised by an unprecedented escalation of disorder and violence. To begin with, between January and March, workers' occupations of factories and bombings took place in Istanbul and Izmir. Next, new clashes between Alevis and Sunnis occurred in June, this time in the northern town of Çorum, leading to 30 deaths.[30] Then, in the same period the left-wing mayor of the Black Sea town of Fatsa declared independence from governmental control, making the intervention of the army necessary to re-establish authority over the newly founded commune. Lastly, and perhaps more importantly, for the first time extremist groups, which had usually fought against each other, began to kill public figures, targeting institutional representatives at local, regional and even national level. Thus, between May and July, the former Prime Minister Erim, the head of the Metal Workers' Union and former chairman of *Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu* (Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions, DİSK) Kemal Türkler, and many deputies and local party leaders died in terrorist attacks. Although it remains difficult to establish the exact death toll of those years, the available figures clearly suggest the extent to which the country was out of control. For instance, while political deaths were estimated at around 230 in 1977, their number rose to between 1,200 and 1,500 in 1979. In the five years between 1975 and 1980 about 5,000 people were victims of political violence.[31]

While the violence evolved and rose, the actions of the governments that ruled the country in the second half of the 1970s proved unsuccessful on nearly every front. The

[28] Martial law was later extended to seven more provinces, for a total of 20 out of 67.
[29] Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *Turkish Dynamics: Bridge across Troubled Lands* (New York and Basingstoke, 2005), 122.
[30] Cf. note 50.
[31] Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey. A Modern History* (London and New York, 2004), 263. The figure for the 1975-1980 period is taken from page 5 of the previous edition (2001) of the same book.

hazardous economic strategies that led to the crisis have already been mentioned. With regard to foreign relations, then, the attitude and resolutions that were adopted on several critical issues led the country to progressive isolation on the Western front, not only from single countries but also in the framework of international organisations like the European Community (EC) and NATO. Contributing to this development were, undoubtedly, the abolition of the ban on the cultivation of poppies for opium production in 1974, the military invasion of Cyprus and the following partition of the island in the same year, the deterioration of relations with the US and French governments as they started contemplating the recognition of the Armenian "genocide" (in the same years in which Armenian terrorist ASALA began to kill Turkish diplomats abroad), and the first signs of Turkish-Arab cooperation in the aftermath of the oil crises.[32]

If the economic and diplomatic records were critical, the political performances were possibly worse. During those years parties and politicians became increasingly polarised. The gap between ideologies and interests of opposite political factions widened to such an extent that all efforts coalesced to attack each other rather than solving problems in the interest of the country. The military repeatedly suggested the formation of a strong and radical coalition to bring at least temporary stability and to allow the implementation of effective solutions. However, political actors were not able, nor probably willing, to abandon personal rivalries; for instance, they persisted in blaming each other for the spread of violence instead of fighting it together. By the end of the 1970s, even civilian institutions like the higher bureaucracy and the security forces were ideologically influenced and politically polarised – a condition that suggested little chance of any spontaneous resolution.[33]

In this difficult situation, a new critical factor came to complicate the already precarious domestic balances: the rise of political Islam. Presumably encouraged by the religious wave that had spread in Iran with the rise to power of Ruhollah Khomeini, provocative religious manifestations that had always been inconceivable in secularist Turkey took place in 1980. In May, the name of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was welcomed with jeers by worshippers at a mosque in Fatih, a conservative neighbourhood of Istanbul. On September 6, during a national rally organised in Konya by the Islamist *Millî Selamet Partisi* (National Salvation Party, MSP) of Necmettin Erbakan, return to the *şeriat* (Islamic law) was invoked,

[32] The international dynamics and Turkey's diplomatic performance of those years are illustrated in Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey. A Modern History* (London and New York, 2004), 273-277.
[33] The polarisation of society, parties and institutions, linked to the nature of the Turkish political system and the legacy of the 1961 constitution, is carefully explained in Clement Henry Dodd, *The Crisis of Turkish Democracy* (Huntingdon, 1990), pp. 34-48.

and a significant number of participants refused to stand when the national anthem was played.

Six days later, in the light of the polarisation of society and institutions, the increasing violence and terrorism of an ethnic, religious and above all political nature, the persistent economic crisis, the overall inefficiency of politicians and, ultimately, the threat of religious revival, the military overthrew the government and established direct control of the country.

12 September 1980

In the early hours of September 12 the military moved their troops to Ankara, suspended parliament and outlawed all political parties. Unlike 1960, when only a faction within the military had seized power,[34] this time the coup d'état was staged by the military institution in its entirety; the military hierarchy was therefore maintained. In the days that immediately followed, parliament was replaced by the newly formed National Security Assembly,[35] which included the chief of the General Staff and the commanders of the Army, Navy, Air Force and *gendarmerie*. The chief of the General Staff, General Kenan Evren, became head of state, while a retired commander of the Navy, Admiral Bülent Ulusu, was appointed as prime minister. The government that was formed was composed predominantly of civilians; nine out of twenty-seven new ministers had already been part of the technocratic cabinet of the 1971-1973 inter-regnum, while the remaining eighteen were retired bureaucrats and generals. Civil ministers were entrusted with the economy, while the others managed all other state affairs.[36] In any case, the National Security Assembly retained legislative power and the right to veto government decisions.

In the immediate aftermath of the coup, all party leaders and a total of fifty parliamentarians were arrested, along with the leaders of two opposite union groups, namely the left-wing DİSK and the far rightist *Milliyetçi İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu* (Confederation of Nationalist Trade Unions, MİSK). In addition, the 51,000 workers who were on strike at that moment were ordered to return to the factories, and so they did. The

[34] For a thorough investigation into the 1960 coup see W.F. Weiker, *The Turkish Revolution 1960-1961* (Washington, 1963).
[35] The word "assembly" is chosen to translate National Security Assembly (*Milli Güvenlik Konseyi*) in order to avoid possible confusion with the National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*), which was founded during the military regime of 1960-1961 and has been already mentioned in the text.
[36] Notwithstanding the fact that both civilians and military formed part of this government, the expression "military government" will be used throughout the whole work to refer to the government (as a whole) that administered the country during the 1980-1983 regime.

detention of party leaders followed various developments; for instance, Demirel and Ecevit were released after one month, Erbakan spent nine months in prison on a charge of anti-secular activities, and Türkeş was sentenced to death for terrorist activities along with 220 MHP members.[37] At the same time, all party leaders were banned from any political activity for ten years.

The 1980-1983 regime and culture

The military aimed at fighting terrorism and violence, restoring law and order, and redefining the political system so as to prevent the country from being ruled by chaos again.[38] The major steps to accomplish these aims were to purge the political class of all radical elements, create a new legislation and constitution, adopt cautious economic policies and, not least, dismantle political groups.

An ambitious objective, that encompassed all the others, was the depoliticization of the country. In fact, the political polarisation and violence that had divided Turkish society in the previous years suggested to the military that politics was the seed of all problems, as it had encouraged the ideological conflict that had paralysed the country. Accordingly, politics came to be confined in the hands of the few who were in power, all associations were closed down and, even, the archives of political parties were confiscated and probably destroyed. As Zürcher put it, "in their zeal to enforce a radical break with the past, the generals even tried to destroy the past itself."[39]

The military understood the "depoliticization mission" as necessarily totalising. In other words, they applied a large number of limiting measures in every aspect of society in order to hamper all the activities that, in their view, represented a threat to the unity and indivisibility of the country. Leaving aside the specific policies perpetrated by the regime that will emerge in the following chapter through the analysis of the cartoons of that period, it is worth introducing here a panoramic view of the impact that the military rule had on the Turkish cultural landscape – the word "culture" being used to refer to the intellectual

[37] Their death sentences, like many others, were not carried out. Türkeş was released from jail for health problems after 4.5 years.
[38] Kenan Evren, *Kenan Evren'in Anıları 1* (Istanbul, 1990), 545-555.
[39] Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey. A Modern History* (London and New York, 2004), 279.

flourishing and circulation of ideas in the broadest sense, though limiting the account to the mainstream production.

In the three years of military government all associations of not only political but also cultural nature were shut down, universities were put under strict control through the creation of a Council of Higher Education (CHE),[40] and political debates were forbidden in any public place. In addition to the promotion of political ideologies that were not in line with the nationalist view of the military, the formation of platforms for discussion on political and social matters that could influence people's perception of the government was prevented. Censorship became the most effective tool by which the regime came to control the intellectual life, especially in Istanbul, the city that hosted the headquarters of nearly every major Turkish publishing house, newspaper, magazine, radio and television channel.

As far as books and films are concerned, an endless number of titles (local as well as foreign, contemporary as well as earlier works) were "found guilty" of promoting political ideologies that did not conform with the views of the regime, or of discrediting the military institution – hence, according to the junta, of instigating division within the country. The titles on the black list were withdrawn from circulation and, allegedly, many of them were burned.[41]

With regard to the mass media, the military imposed total control on all radio and television broadcasting. The state radio and television authority was purged by moving over a hundred employees to various other ministries and, needless to say, all broadcasting was meticulously prevented from conveying a negative image of the military rule.[42]

With respect to the press, local military commanders and prosecutors, and, allegedly, on some occasions even the junta itself, scrutinised the content of newspapers and magazines. For the articles that the military did not approve, warnings were sent to the editor as a first step; then, the medium in question was sentenced to temporary closure, sometimes without receiving any preliminary notice. Finally, it was not infrequent for journalists, editors and writers in general to be tried in front of a tribunal and eventually imprisoned.

No official list of off-limits topics was ever produced during the three years; rather, the prohibition of paragraphs, articles or entire issues was totally arbitrary and seemingly

[40] This organ was created expressly to control the political inclination of universities; its organisation will be outlined in Chapter 4.
[41] Cihan Demirci, in a private interview with the author, February 28 2011.
[42] Clement Henry Dodd, *The Crisis of Turkish Democracy* (Huntingdon, 1990), 55-56.

daily the regime would identify newly forbidden topics.[43] In the light of these circumstances, it is no surprise that, overall, between September 1980 and November 1983, newspapers were not published for 300 days, 303 lawsuits were brought against thirteen major newspapers, and 400 journalists were sentenced to imprisonment for a total of 3,000 years.[44]

Another factor that hit the press during the regime was the steady rise in the cost of paper, which inevitably increased the price of newspapers and magazines, discouraging sales. Statistics show that after 1979 paper was the commodity that rose the most in price. For instance, a newspaper that cost 5 Turkish Lira (TL) in 1979, was sold at 10 TL in 1980, 30 TL in 1982 and 40 TL in 1983.[45]

Predictably, this climate affected satire in a number of ways. First of all, the decision of the junta to shut down all associations applied also to the Istanbul-based Association of Cartoonists (*Karikatürcüler Derneği*). At that time this association counted about 300 members and was to Turkish cartoonists an incredibly important platform of exhibition and exchange. In fact, since 1974 it used to organise (and it still does) the yearly International Nasreddin Hodja Cartoon Contest (*Uluslararası Nasreddin Hoca Karikatür Yarışması*), which attracted cartoonists from all over the world and, at the same time, promoted national cartoons at global level by launching Turkish cartoonists on the international scene. The association became active again after the return to the parliamentary system, but the effects of the three years of regime were visible. In particular, it remained impossible to organise the contest for another five years. According to Erdoğan Bozok, active member of the association, this was due to two main reasons: namely, the lack of interest of the municipality – which had always managed the organisation of the contest in cooperation with the association – in providing a space to exhibit the works in the competition, and the difficulty of finding a sponsor to promote the event.[46] The contest, which had never experienced such problems in the previous decade, was ultimately resumed in 1988.

Second, the Museum (later Center) of Cartoons and Humour (*Karikatür ve Mizah Müzesi*) was also closed down. The museum was housed in the same building as the association; so, in the aftermath of the coup, access to the building was suddenly denied altogether. In theory, once the military left the political scene it would have been possible to

[43] Alpay Kabacalı, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Türkiye'de Basın Sansürü* (Istanbul, 1990), 210.
[44] Cf. Various Authors, "Kılıç Hep Kalemi Kesti. 1860'lardan 1980'lere iktidar-basın ilişkileri," *NTV Tarih* No. 15, (April 2010): 32-42, 41.
[45] Cf. Orhan Koloğlu, *Osmanlı'dan 21. Yüzyıla Basın Tarihi* (Istanbul, 2006), 149-150.
[46] Erdoğan Bozok, in a private interview with the author, February 17 2011.

retrieve the material that was left inside; this is what happened, in fact, with other associations. In practice, however, during the regime the demolition of the building was ordered, with the result that a rich collection of material was lost forever. The museum finally reopened in 1989, in a new building in a different district.[47]

Third, generally speaking a number of satirical opportunities died with the decision of the junta to forbid political debates, critical analyses of their political performance and discussions on any political matter. This happened in two ways. The most straightforward consequence of the creation of these taboos was that in many cases politics ceased to represent raw material for satire. The second and most profound consequence was that the public and readership gradually distanced themselves from politics. Three years of rule based on fear and repression caused a great part of the population to renounce political engagement and the fight for democracy. Experts in that period as well as cartoonists agree on the fact that the junta was rather successful in depoliticizing society and that the generation born in the early 1970s grew up learning to fear politics.[48] Indeed, alternative satirical pathways were explored during the three years, as the following chapter will show, but it was not always easy to be appealing, evade censorship, and leave a mark all at the same time.

Lastly, the impending threat of censorship was twofold. Obviously, every satirical work ran the risk of being withdrawn from circulation because of its content, but there was also a less evident, yet very likely, possibility of it falling into the clutches of the censors. In that period written prose, cartoons, and to a lesser extent poetry came to be the most common forms of satire, and they made their way into print media like newspapers and magazines of various kinds, that is to say publications that were not necessarily satirical in nature. Since the junta was extremely vigilant about monitoring all publications, it frequently happened that the newspapers or magazines that published satire were censored and banned for varying periods because of the content of other written pieces. In that way, satire was denied visibility in spite of the fact that it had potentially survived censorship.

The complicated cultural landscape that characterised the years of military rule, with its opposition as well as pro-military trends, undoubtedly deserves a more detailed account than the one briefly offered here. However the scope of this study necessitates that it is now

[47] The history of and controversies surrounding the museum at various times are the topic of a current study by the author. The findings from this parallel research will be published in future academic articles.
[48] M. Bilal Arık, *Değişen Toplum Değişen Karikatür. 1980'den sonra yaşanan toplumsal değişim ve karikatürün değişen işlevi* (Istanbul, 1998), 101-102, 116, Orhan Koloğlu, *Osmanlı'dan 21. Yüzyıla Basın Tarihi* (Istanbul, 2006), 153-154 and Cihan Demirci in a private interview with the author (February 28, 2011).

time to delve into the domain of graphic satire, and in particular of our case study, to investigate how, while in many print media cartoons were being moved from the cover to the inner pages, *Gırgır* responded to the difficult environment brought about by the coup.

CHAPTER 2
GIRGIR: BETWEEN TRADITION AND INNOVATION

The Birth of Gırgır

Gırgır was created in 1971 by the cartoonist Oğuz Aral. Initially, it was nothing more than a regular feature in the daily newspaper *Gün* (Day), which published the satirical creations of Aral every day. From the outset the cartoon was popular among the readership, indeed it soon became clear that it brought a significant contribution to the sales. As a result it was upgraded to a full page, in which not only Aral but a regular team of cartoonists contributed with various satirical styles.[1] The full-page *Gırgır* proved even more successful than its earlier modest corner, and taking the step to the creation of a stand-alone publication was surprisingly easy. The first magazine issue of *Gırgır* was published on August 26 1972. From that date onwards, up until August 1989, the magazine, headed by Aral, was printed every weekend.[2]

Since the very beginning *Gırgır* proved to be a successful and original magazine, whose cultural value was testified, for instance, by the regular contribution of a luminary of modern Turkish literature such as Aziz Nesin.[3] The birth of *Gırgır* in the early 1970s was a true turning point in the long tradition of Turkish satire, which dated back to late Ottoman times.[4] Actually, *Gırgır* was the first long-running publication devoted entirely to visual satire in the history of the country;[5] moreover, its creation came to enrich Turkey's satirical landscape by promoting a new model that marked an important break from the past. In fact,

[1] During this phase Aral was joined by his brother Tekin, Mim Uykusuz, Ferit Öngören and Oğuz Alplaçin.
[2] Exceptions (times when *Gırgır* was not published) will be discussed in the following chapter.
[3] Aziz Nesin (1915-1995) was Turkey's leading satirist, short story author and playwright. He was a prolific writer who relied on black humour to denounce oppression, corruption, inefficiency, and nepotism in government, and to convey strong messages about equality. He won several awards in various countries for his stories and plays.
[4] Satire was a well-known genre already in the late Ottoman Empire. The first editorial cartoon was published in 1867 in the newspaper *Istanbul*. In 1870 the eminent writers and journalists Namık Kemal and Teodor Kasap founded *Diyojen* (Diogenes), the first satirical magazine of the Ottoman Empire. From the 1870s onwards the satirical genre became popular also beyond the press, precisely through the shadow puppet theatre, in which characters were used to mock the main social and political events of the time.
[5] The presence of written satire was minor in comparison to its graphic counterpart. In terms of regular appointments, written satire was limited to a column of jokes and half a page of humorous stories, which where occasionally sided by other short texts of various nature. That graphic satire was prominent is also confirmed by the fact that, for example, in the 1980s about forty cartoonists worked for *Gırgır*, while there were only two writers of humour. Cf. Cihan Demirci, "Gırgır'ın hikayesi-2", *MiniDEV*, 31 July 2004.

Gırgır may be deemed the revolutionary event that marked the beginning of the third (and, for the time being, the last) phase of the art of cartoons in modern Turkey. Last but not least, its founders had a rather left-wing sensibility, which shaped the editorial policies of the magazine, as it will emerge in this work – especially from the analysis of *Gırgır*'s political strategies under the military regime.

Initially, *Gırgır* had a print run of 40,000 copies per week. Its popularity rose quickly, however, and in its second year it came to publish 100,000 copies. By 1976, its success had doubled, translating into 200,000 copies. Then, in the agitated late 1970s, its sales increased to some 300,000 copies. However, it was during the regime that the record was reached: in 1981, the number of distributed copies amounted to 400,000 and, in 1982, it reached a peak of 500,000.[6] The following discussion will attempt to explain this astonishing increase in sales by discussing the importance of this very singular magazine, as well as its role within the local satirical tradition.

Gırgır *and the national cartooning tradition*

Print media in the late-Ottoman era

It is generally accepted that modern cartooning in Turkey took its first steps in the late 1920s, breaking with the past Ottoman tradition. The name to which the first modern Turkish cartoons are linked is unmistakably that of Cemal Nadir,[7] who was the first artist to work for a newspaper as a cartoonist.

It should be kept in mind that, at that time, the newly founded (in 1923) Turkish republic was undergoing an all-encompassing process of reformation aimed at abandoning the legacy of the by-then old-fashioned Ottoman Empire, in favour of the creation of a Western-style, secularist, nationalist state. Among these reforms was the abolition of the Ottoman

[6] From a letter to Orhan Koloğlu by Oğuz Aral, written in 1984 and reproduced in Orhan Koloğlu, *Türkiye Karikatür Tarihi* (Istanbul, 2005), p. 342. On the same page Koloğlu reports that *Gırgır* became object of an article in *The Guardian* after reaching the 500,000 figure.

[7] Unlike the case of later cartoonists and other public figures, who are mentioned by first name and surname just the first time and only by the surname later on, in the case of Cemal Nadir reference to him is made using his full name throughout the whole text. The reason for that is that technically there is no surname in this case but rather two first names. Surnames were made compulsory for all Turkish citizens as late as 1934 and many artists of that period remained known by the previous version of their name, usually a double first name.

alphabet, and its replacement with the Latin script. The rapid shift toward the new alphabet in 1928 saw the nation become illiterate overnight, resulting in high losses for the print media.

It was in this context that, in the same year, Cemal Nadir was appointed to draw daily in *Akşam* (Evening). His cartoons had the merit of encouraging the readers to continue to buy the newspaper by making its pages still familiar, notwithstanding the new script. In the light of the success of this editorial move, it was not long until other dailies follow suit. Thus, cartooning was elevated to the rank of a full-time profession.[8]

Besides being the first professional cartoonist, Cemal Nadir held some other important firsts in the history of Turkish cartoons. He was the author of the first cartoon strip, as well as of the first attempt to create an animated film. His work was also the subject of the first cartoon album and of the first cartoon exhibition in the country.[9]

The cartoons of Cemal Nadir and of the other cartoonists of his generation revolved around the daily life in the big cities, mainly Istanbul. The predilection for this theme was due to the fact that until the end of the Second World War Turkey remained relatively isolated from the rest of the world in terms of cultural exchange.[10] The circulation of foreign newspapers and magazines was extremely limited and the masses could learn about the wider world only through the state radio, at a time when radio was not yet a widespread commodity in Turkey.[11] Consequently, the cartoonists of the late 1920s and of the following two decades used to portray local realities; they satirised the habits and beliefs of the people of the *mahalle*, the neighbourhood, which was the typical dimension in which the lively city life took place.

[8] In the previous decades, cartoons were usually created by intellectuals as part of their cultural endeavour; cartooning was not yet considered (nor practiced) as a major activity.

[9] For a thorough study of Cemal Nadir's school see Hilmi Yücebaş, *Bütün Cepheleriyle Cemal Nadir* (Istanbul, 1950).

[10] I have started to address the issue of Turkey's opening to the world in the post-WWII era in the sphere of graphic satire in a recent study, which I hope to develop further as a structured research project. I have published some of the findings of this preliminary work in an article that discusses Turkish cartoonists' meeting with internationalism, and in particular with their Italian colleagues. See Valentina Marcella, "Of Turks Who Do Not Smoke and Amuse the World: Early Encounters between Italian and Turkish Cartoonists", *Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea - Turkey, Europe, Mediterranean: "A Common Destiny"? Cultural Interactions in a Comparative Perspective from the Second Half of the 19th Century* No. 23, (October 2015), available at http://www.studistorici.com.

[11] In 1950 only 320,853 radio licenses were counted throughout the whole country. Cf. table 4.5 in Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *Turkish Dynamics: Bridge across Troubled Lands* (New York and Basingstoke, 2005), 119. The total population in the same year was 20,947,188. Cf. table 3.1 in Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, *Türkiye İstatistik Yıllığı 2009* (Ankara, 2010), p. 28.

The "1950 generation"

The second wave in Turkish cartoons arrived with the so-called "Elli kuşağı" (1950 generation). In the 1950s and 1960s, this new generation experimented with a new line of cartooning that was innovative for various reasons. First, they introduced the political. This was an era of fast political change in the county, in which the single-party regime was abandoned in favour of the multi-party system, relationships with Europe and the US developed through the Marshall Plan assistance and NATO membership, and democracy was threatened by the first military coup. It was also the period in which the country discovered the Left: left-wing ideals began to circulate, leftist movements were founded, and a leftist (socialist) party gained seats in parliament. A wave of left-wing intellectuals emerged, among them the cartoonists of the 1950 generation. Their cartoons were deeply political, dealing with issues such as the class struggle, unjust social order, and revolution from a progressivist perspective. Significantly, these cartoons were devoid of any humorous angle.

Furthermore, the content and style of these cartoons was manifestly different from the ones of the previous phase. Typically local characters and themes linked to the *mahalle* and the city were completely abandoned. Instead, a minimalist style gained ground in which characters and spaces did not identify with a specific place. The purpose of this decontextualisation was to make these cartoons, and consequently their message, universal. In line with this objective, the absence of words, another characteristic of the 1950 generation (as opposed to the use of captions, which had been the norm in the cartoons of the previous era), was meant to stress the universality of their messages.

Finally, another substantial difference was the self-perceived role of the cartoonist. While the cartoonists of the previous era entertained the public and made them reflect on small-scale problems, the 1950 generation aimed at educating the masses to ultimately mobilise them against oppressors. Therefore, in their own view, cartoonists were the intellectual guides that would raise people's consciousness.[12]

The cartoons of the 1950 generation did not cease to be in the limelight in the 1970s; nonetheless, they were overshadowed, at least in part, by a new graphic satire – that of *Gırgır*.

[12] The philosophy of the 1950 generation and their differences from the generation of Cemal Nadir are explored in Ayhan Akman, "From Cultural Schizophrenia to Modernist Binarism: Cartoons and Identities in Turkey (1930-1975)", in *Political Cartoons in the Middle East*, ed. Fatma Müge Göçek (Princeton, 1998), pp. 83-131.

From 1950 generation to innovative *Gırgır*

Gırgır was revolutionary in a number of ways. To begin with, it had a new objective: making visual satire popular and enjoyable for the wider public. Until then, Turkish satire had, in fact, been a high form of art through which intellectuals addressed each other. Indeed, in the 1930s and 1940s cartoons were successful in relieving the discomfort caused by the new alphabet; however, those who used to buy newspapers did not represent a large part of the population.[13] In the following decades, then, the cartoons of the 1950 generation, with their strong political content and abstract style, distanced themselves from the masses.[14] In the 1970s, *Gırgır* came to restore this tie with the people and increased the public interest in satire.

Second, and directly connected with this objective, *Gırgır* was innovative in terms of content. What made *Gırgır*'s satire popular in the early years was the use of sexuality as a core theme. Actually, the pages of the magazine were filled with often sexually explicit sketches and jokes. This is testified above all by the typical *Gırgır* photomontages, namely black-and-white photos of naked women (actresses, models, show girls) on which the cartoonists used to draw comic characters that made funny jokes while surrounding or covering the female body. Certainly, the display of the naked female body was not a peculiarity of *Gırgır*, for it was already common for pictures of naked women to appear in newspapers; what was new, however, was the idea of resorting to this kind of eroticism to create humour. Doubtlessly, this choice was decisive in increasing the interest in the magazine and attracting the readership, and it is no coincidence that these photomontages were usually visible on the cover page.

In the mid-1970s sexual gags were progressively abandoned in favour of a more social and political satire.[15] *Gırgır* became increasingly concerned with the social transformation that the country was experiencing; in particular, it began to deal with themes such as migration, urbanisation, and their consequences for everyday life. To a certain extent, by depicting the local world, this satire drew from the Cemal Nadir generation; yet, contrary to the latter, who focused primarily on the humorous representation of peoples' faults, *Gırgır*

[13] In 1945, about 45 per cent of the male population aged over 14 was literate; literate women did not exceed 15 per cent. Cf. table 1.6 in Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, *İstatistik Göstergeler 1923-2009* (Ankara, 2010), 7.
[14] Actually, this is the paradox of the 1950 generation, which sought to mobilise the masses through a visual code that the masses were not able to understand.
[15] *Gırgır*'s first cover page to express political satire was the edition of December 7 1975, which was dedicated to the victims of university students uprisings, leftist and rightist alike.

pushed forward the interest in the social aspects of people's existence. In other words, *Gırgır* was innovative insofar as it revolved around the new social dynamics and emphasised the problems experienced by common citizens as a result. In this respect, since these dynamics affected every aspect of life, everything became a potential subject of the cartoons, from the *gecekondu* reality to the world of employment, from the youth – with their school and university problems, to financial hardship. *Gırgır* made ordinary citizens the protagonists of its satire; as a result, this new satire became accessible and enjoyable not only by intellectuals but by nearly everyone.

Another innovation in terms of content was the fact that *Gırgır*'s cartoons were the first to portray domestic interiors. The satirical representation of society that had developed in the 1930s and 1940s had always portrayed social groups in public places such as streets, in shops, or the bus stop, just to mention a few. Conversely, *Gırgır* began to set comic sketches in people's living rooms, kitchens, bedrooms and even bathrooms. Evidently, this trend mirrored the collapse of the boundary between public and private that took place in Turkish society in the same years, as discussed in the previous chapter.[16]

Next, *Gırgır* was innovative in terms of style. While the Cemal Nadir period had witnessed cartoons with captions and the 1950 generation had elaborated wordless cartoons, *Gırgır* introduced the framed cartoons with balloons; that is, pictures framed by a square line within which the words spoken by characters are enclosed in circles. Also the black-and-white photomontages that characterised the first years of the magazine were a peculiarity of *Gırgır*. In addition, the magazine relaunched two genres that had remained in the shadows during the minimalist era of the 1950s and 1960s, namely, comic strips and cartoon series.

To some extent, in terms of style, there were echoes of *Mad* in *Gırgır*. *Mad*, published in the US, was a typical example of Anglo-Saxon satire and at that time it was the best-selling satirical magazine in the world. This resemblance should not be surprising, as *Gırgır* was open to foreign influences. As a matter of fact, foreign cartoon trends were adopted – though always adapted to the Turkish reality; for, making cartoons local was *the sine qua non* for their understanding and appreciation by the local readership.

[16] Akman makes the point that a "Western" graphic satire developed in the 1930s – parallel to the "local" one – which portrayed outdoor as well as indoor scenes in a Western style. See Ayhan Akman, "From Cultural Schizophrenia to Modernist Binarism: Cartoons and Identities in Turkey (1930-1975)", in *Political Cartoons in the Middle East*, ed. Fatma Müge Göçek (Princeton, 1998), pp. 83-131. However, the interiors of this Westernised model were not characterised by typical elements; rather, they were neutral empty rooms in which the scenes were set. Therefore, it is correct to deem them part of a different tradition that should not be seen as having influence on the "domestic turn" of *Gırgır*'s local satire.

In addition to stylistic borrowing, *Gırgır*'s interest in foreign trends was manifest in its reproducing of cartoons from abroad. The longest-lasting reproduction of this kind was *Hasbi Tembeler* (Beetle Bailey) by US cartoonist Mort Walker, which the magazine published for almost a decade.[17] Apparently, the fact that *Gırgır* promoted a satirical model that was close to the American one caused resentment among the revolutionary fringe of Turkish cartoonists;[18] nonetheless, it is hard to imagine that these critical cartoonists did not see (even though they would not acknowledge it) the richness that the imported novelties added to the satirical landscape of the country.

Gırgır was also innovative in terms of language, promoting the use of everyday language as part of its aim of bridging the gap between the art of cartooning and the masses. Thus the characters of its cartoons used a simple language, sometimes dialects and, often, colloquialisms, ranging from those of the youth, to the *gecekondu* alleys and the street vendors'.[19]

Later, *Gırgır* was also innovative in the promotion of a new role for the cartoonist. As already noticed, in the 1930s and 1940s cartoonists were intellectuals who basically communicated only with other intellectuals through cartoons, whereas in the 1950s and 1960s they had become popular with the masses. By contrast, *Gırgır* turned the cartoonist into a familiar figure, a common person who experienced the same problems as ordinary people, and who showed his solidarity through cartoons.

The way in which *Gırgır* achieved this new perception of the cartoonist was even more revolutionary than the shift itself. In fact, *Gırgır* was the first magazine to recruit its cartoonists from among its readership: any reader could send in their amateur cartoons to the headquarters of the magazine, and Aral and his staff would invite the most promising amateurs to come and be taught some cartooning techniques. With time, they would be upgraded to the status of professional cartoonists and incorporated in the *Gırgır* team.[20] With this system, *Gırgır* became a de facto cartooning school, which made the magazine successful

[17] We will return to *Hasbi Tembeler* in Chapter 6.
[18] Turgut Çeviker, "Ana Çizgileriyle Türk Karikatür Tarihi", in *Karikatürkiye. Karikatürlerle Cumhuriyet Tarihi. 1923-2008*, ed. Turgut Çeviker (Istanbul, 2010), pp. 15-30, 27.
[19] Allegedly, Aral's absolute devotion to colloquial speech caused some problem among the cartoonists of *Gırgır*, and some attempts to create characters who spoke a more sophisticated language were made in the 1980s. Turgut Çeviker, in a private interview with the author (December 22, 2011).
[20] The mechanism of recruitment from the readership will be explained in detail later in this chapter.

in meeting popular demand not only by promoting a satire that was close to the people, but also by giving potentially everyone the chance to become a cartoonist.

The role of the cartoonist was reinvented by *Gırgır* in a further way. While in previous newspapers and magazines each illustration was made by a single cartoonist, *Gırgır* was the first case in which a cartoon could be assigned to two people: one performed the task of inventing the joke, while the other translated the joke into pictures. This differentiation did not apply to every single cartoon,[21] yet its presence was solid enough to convey *Gırgır* an unprecedented "intrinsic dynamism", as the cartoonist and writer Ferit Öngören defined it.[22]

Last but not least, *Gırgır* was innovative due to the printing technique that it adopted; it was, in fact, the first Turkish magazine to use offset printing.[23] This way of printing was introduced in Turkey in the 1960s by the newspaper *Günaydın* (Good Morning), which belonged to the media group of *Gün*, the newspaper in which *Gırgır* originated. *Gırgır* inherited the use of this printing technique from *Gün* (and *Günaydın* before it) and never abandoned it. The richness of offset printing was due to the fact that it allowed the publication of a large quantity of photographs and images, conveying a new outlook to the printed medium. For this reason, compared to the fully written pages that characterised the majority of the newspapers and magazines of that period, *Gırgır* appeared closer to the television and more appealing to a wide readership. The latter, attracted by the look of the magazine, came to include also the illiterate public. Moreover, offset printing was extremely fast, allowing cartoonists to modify the forthcoming issue up until one hour prior to the release. This made *Gırgır* the most up-to-date magazine in circulation, and thus – it is fair to assume – the one that attracted the most curiosity and interest.[24]

[21] The cartoons made by two people are recognisable from the dual signature.
[22] Ferit Öngören, *Cumhuriyet'in 75 yılında Türk Mizahı ve Hicvi* (Istanbul, 1998), 119.
[23] Offset printing is a printing technique in which the inked image is transferred from a plate to a rubber blanket, then to the printing surface. When used in combination with the lithographic process, which is based on the repulsion of oil and water, the offset technique employs a flat (planographic) image carrier on which the image to be printed obtains ink from ink rollers, while the non-printing area attracts a water-based film, keeping the non-printing areas ink-free.
[24] By the mid-1980s, the offset technique became commonly used by all print media in the country. This factor contributed to the progressive loss of enthusiasm for *Gırgır*, which, in spite of its popularity as a modern innovative magazine in the 1970s, had slowly become old-fashioned by the mid-1980s. The gradual decline of *Gırgır* in those years will be outlined in the conclusions.

The specificity of Gırgır

The previous section discussed the features that made *Gırgır* the initiator of a new wave of graphic satire in Turkey, one that was later imitated and followed by other cartoonists and magazines. Having acknowledged the cultural value of those features, we will now discuss two further novelties that I believe deserve a separate section. This judgement is made on the grounds of their character, which, as will become clear in the following pages, differentiated them from the ones highlighted above in political terms. That is to say, these two further innovations earned *Gırgır* not only a cultural but also a political value, which elevated the importance of the magazine to a unique level – especially (but not only) during the regime.

Voice of common people: amateur and semi-amateur cartoons

Besides the satire created by its permanent staff, every week *Gırgır* used to publish a number of cartoons made by amateur and semi-amateur cartoonists. Two specific spaces were regularly devoted to this purpose, namely the section called *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* (Cub Cartoonists) and the back cover.

Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler occupied the second page of *Gırgır*, sometimes only partially (one column) and more frequently at full length. The cartoons published on this page were accompanied by the name, sometimes also surname and city of origin, of their authors. In addition, a critical comment was included in which the *Gırgır* team made technical remarks and gave suggestions about each cartoon to help the amateur cartoonists.

The back cover, then, was entirely dedicated to the cartoons by authors whose artistic level was at an intermediate step between the amateurs of the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page and the professional cartoonists who regularly worked for the magazine. Like the amateurs' cartoons, these cartoons appeared with the name, surname and sometimes place of origin of their author, but, here no comments were provided on behalf of *Gırgır*'s staff. In terms of themes, stereotypes, aesthetic features, and language, the cartoons of both spaces were similar to those made by *Gırgır*'s permanent staff,[25] basically differing from them in terms of refinement.

[25] These features are not discussed here since they will emerge extensively in the following chapters.

What was the mechanism through which amateurs and semi-amateurs secured the publication of their cartoons? The first step was to submit in person or send in the cartoons to *Gırgır*'s editorial unit, in the district of Cağaloğlu – a traditional part of Istanbul where almost all the publishing houses and newspapers were located. The routine procedure for those who submitted their cartoons for the first time was to leave them with someone in the building and come back to collect them in a week, when they would receive advice from the editor Aral in person. From that moment onwards, many of them would self-train according to the his comments and a few would be called in small groups of about ten to work under the supervision of Aral, who would teach them cartooning techniques. At some point during this training, Aral would deem one cartoon ready for publication, eventually choosing it for the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page.[26]

This was the first significant achievement; nevertheless, the training was far from finished at this stage. Aral's "disciples" would pursue the technical study of the art of cartooning, at the same time, more of their cartoons would be published on the second page. When Aral deemed a cartoonist expert enough, his or her work would be published on the back cover, exactly like the other semi-amateurs who improved their competence by self-training.[27]

After acquiring more experience as back cover cartoonists, the most talented and determined semi-amateurs would be offered the opportunity to work at the headquarters, hence earning the status of full-time *Gırgır* professional. The *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* space was created in 1974 and, by 1978, the first amateurs had joined *Gırgır*'s regular team.[28]

However, the path to publication was not as easy as it might sound. Actually, the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* and the back cover gained ground in the second half of the 1970s when the magazine was already well known. *Gırgır*'s popularity attracted hundreds of amateur cartoonists every day, meaning that going to Çağaloğlu meant queuing for hours, day by day, in the hope that finally one cartoon would be considered for publication.

Murat Kürüz, who started working for the magazine in 1976, recalls his own beginning and the great excitement of taking his first steps under the guidance of Aral. He recalls that the first time that he went to Cağaloğlu he was determined to meet Aral and show

[26] Behiç Pek, in a private interview with the author (July 14 2014).
[27] Cihan Demirci, in a private interview with the author (December 12 2011).
[28] Mevhibe Turay, in a private interview with the author (January 3 2013).

him his cartoons; however, the porters prevented him from accessing the building and told him to leave his cartoons with them and to come back within a week. He insisted on meeting Aral, but they remarked rather discouragingly that they saw hundreds of youngsters like him every day, and that his chances of impressing Aral were slim.[29]

Nonetheless, Kürüz managed to enter the building by means of subterfuge and suddenly found himself among a group of young amateurs who, like him, were there to show their work to the master, but, unlike him, they had been invited to do so. They were, in fact, those who had already been accepted in the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* group, and they were now training with Aral to acquire the minimum standard to be published on the second page. When his turn arrived, Kürüz showed his cartoons to Aral, who immediately understood that he was there for the first time. But, instead of telling him to leave and re-submit his work following the procedures, he let him remain to listen to the advice that he would give to the other amateurs. From that day Kürüz, like many others, started going to *Gırgır*'s headquarters every week, submitting new and revised cartoons to "the master". In his case, the "big day", as Kürüz defined it, arrived six months later, when his first cartoon was finally published on the second page.[30]

Another cartoonist who offers an interesting testimony of the path to join the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* is Cihan Demirci. He recalls that in the late 1970s up to a thousand aspiring cartoonists could show up to Çağaloğlu daily. The first time that he went to submit his works, in 1978, he was a fifteen year-old high school student who had bunked off school – as he often did.[31] He arrived at *Gırgır*'s editorial unit early in the morning, took a waiting ticket number ("like in hospital", he adds) and patiently waited for hours. His turn arrived at a quarter to midnight. Afterwards, he started going to *Gırgır* regularly to receive Aral's comments and suggestions for improvement and within eighteen months he had his first cartoon published.[32]

Given the fact that, as these recollections suggest, more than one year could pass before the publication of the first cartoon, it is fair to wonder what pushed these young amateurs to wait patiently for such long periods and endure such a demanding training. Two factors may answer this question. One was, indeed, the high popularity of the magazine.

[29] Murat Kürüz, *Son Efsane Gırgır* (Istanbul, 2007), 8-9.
[30] Murat Kürüz, *Son Efsane Gırgır* (Istanbul, 2007), 9-14.
[31] As explained in Chapter 1, the late 1970s were a period of demonstrations, strikes and boycotts. These protests usually took places in universities and factories, but could also extend to high schools.
[32] Cihan Demirci, in a private interview with the author (February 28 2011).

Gırgır was an authentic institution in which an incredible number of youth wanted to be published. Suffice to say that in the late 1970s and early 1980s *Gırgır* was not only the best-selling satirical magazine but also the most popular among all the weekly magazines (no matter the nature of their contents) of the whole country. In the same period it is believed to have also become the third-ranking satirical magazine worldwide, after the American *Mad* and the Russian *Crocodile*. That considered, it is no surprise that "the *Gırgır* myth" attracted swarms of youngsters to its headquarters.

The second reason that young amateurs persisted in training every day for months without exactly knowing when their first cartoon would be published was money. In fact, Aral used to do one thing that no one else did at that time, namely he paid for all the cartoons that he selected in spite of the fact that they would not always be published. Every time a member of the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* produced a cartoon that Aral deemed good, they would be paid.[33] This fact did not guarantee that the cartoon would ever appear in the magazine, be it because it had not met the necessary standards or because the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page only had space for up to a maximum of twelve cartoons every week (the number basically depended on the format, obviously comic strips demanded more room than single cartoons). Nonetheless, the amateur was remunerated for his efforts and improvements. This practice encouraged the apprentice to pursue the training, in the meanwhile he or she would acquire more skills and finally be ready for publication.

What is more, the remunerations could be very significant. Kürüz recalls having received 75 TL for one of his first cartoons.[34] Demirci even talks about 250 TL, in a period in which the monthly wage of a school teacher amounted to 500 TL, he explains, mentioning as an example his father's salary.[35] Let us point out that, interestingly, there was no established sum for these cartoons; on the contrary, Aral decided the amount for each of them every time. He would write it on a piece of paper and hand it to the cartoonist, who would show it to the financial unit and then receive the money. In spite of the fact that Aral was only the editor of the magazine and not its owner,[36] his decisions concerning amateurs' and semi-amateurs' remunerations were never questioned.[37] Indeed, the successful sales of those years played a relevant part in making this practice possible; in any case, this was and remained Aral's

[33] Mevhibe Turay, in a private interview with the author (January 3 2013).
[34] Murat Kürüz, *Son Efsane Gırgır* (Istanbul, 2007), 14.
[35] Cihan Demirci, in a private interview with the author (February 28 2011).
[36] The owner was the same of the newspaper *Gün*, namely Haldun Simavi.
[37] Mevhibe Turay, in a private interview with the author (January 3 2013).

peculiarity, for, allegedly, no other editor had such financial power in the management of a magazine.

In brief, drawing for *Gırgır* in those years was both a matter of prestige and money: notwithstanding the great effort and patience that the training demanded, the whole system of recruitment set up by Aral made the prospect of being published in the magazine highly appealing. It is no coincidence, thus, that amateurs and semi-amateurs who aimed at gaining their corner in the magazine came from all over the country and beyond, including Cyprus and even Germany. Ultimately, however, being published in *Gırgır* was not only a question of prestige and remuneration; for the amateurs and semi-amateurs, as for the professional cartoonists, it was a chance for expression.

The *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* and the cartoons on the back cover experienced a real boom in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It appears that so many amateurs had started to come to *Gırgır*'s offices in the hope of being selected that Aral deemed it necessary to impose some sort of "pre-selection" and to disclose some details of the selection mechanisms so as to prevent thousands of below-standard cartoonists from wasting their time. In a collective message entitled *Minik Yalvarmalar!..* (Small Requests!..), published on a *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page of September 1980, Aral advised:

> 1. Don't rush to send in the first cartoons that you draw just because you think "I like cartoons". It is a pity for both you and me, since you waste money for the mail service and I waste my time, which is already lessening more and more. Please, work, work hard in your environment, and send something only after having pleased the people around you. Don't send in your works thinking "Ok then, I'll try my luck. Perhaps I have some aptitude for cartooning of which I'm not aware myself, maybe it's a stroke of luck like just picking up a ten at the bingo." It's not my dear... It's not...
>
> 2. If you live in Istanbul, don't send your cartoons by mail. Leave your works at the magazine on Mondays. I tell you, it also increases their value. My colleagues (*lit*. the friends who started [to work here] first) and I meet once a month and talk. We answer all your questions. If only one out of the almost one thousand cartoons that we receive from the rest of the country (*lit*. from Anatolia) joined us from Istanbul, would this space be enough for the 8-10 people to which I already write? Friends who do not use their advantage of being in Istanbul, who wait for a

printed reply in the magazine, and send about 20 cartoons each, like Hüsamettin Var, Cengiz Çakıcı, have no choice but to wait a lot. There are many friends who travel many kilometres from Artvin, Sivas, Bolu, Burdur, Adana, Ankara and many other provinces exclusively to have the opportunity to show their cartoons. Is it that hard to come to Çağaloğlu from [the neighbourhood of] Erenköy?

3. Please write your name and address on the back of the cartoon.

4. And then again please, I beg you, don't expect a private reply from me in person. I swear that I don't even write greeting cards to my closest friends and relatives who live far away.

5. In many cases, in spite of being good your cartoon will not be published... it will not be published. Don't be hurt, don't get angry. You think of yourselves as individuals, I necessarily have to see you as one of thousands. And I don't dispense justice, [...] I just try to help you to draw in a good way, as far as I can. That said, if you get angry, don't vote for me when I run for office to become a deputy. We settle up and that's all... You wonder when I'll become a candidate? ... When I think that I won't be useful in this country any more.

Now, you see, the space for two cartoons has been wasted again. Even though we typeset the text as small, cramped and illegibly scrawled handwriting..."[38]

Besides shedding light on some practices and procedures of *Gırgır*, this message provides some insights into Aral's general attitude toward the amateurs. His tone is generally friendly, and ironic in some parts of the message; however, it is serious too. This double nature is a common feature that characterises many of the comments that are made to the cartoons of the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* (in spite of the fact that these comments were not necessarily written by the editor in person but were often the result of common evaluations of *Gırgır*'s professionals, including him). Usually their tone was rather straightforward, as the negative remarks were always outspoken; at the same time, the advice for improvements was given in a very encouraging way. For example:

"I don't understand what happened to your humour, my dear. I have in front of me six cartoons of yours, all made with great care. Some have been

[38] *Gırgır*, September 14 1980, author's own translation – as in all other cases of quotations from the magazine included in this thesis.

> revised [by my staff], on the others there's nothing to add in terms of quality. Yet I remember having published some very good cartoons of yours. Your style has clearly reached a master level. Now leave aside all the elaborate decorations and ornaments of any kind and start scribbling with your heart… try new expressions and shapes."[39]

It is possible to notice that negative as well as positive comments were always expressed with a touch of irony, as in the case of one that started by claiming that "your cartoon is not so bad, to the extent that one should be afraid of sending it in", and then clarified that "even, it's not bad at all."[40] Sometimes, irony could turn into sarcasm, as in the case of a cartoon that probably did not deserve publication because the image was "careless and full of mistakes", but was given a chance nonetheless as "the fact that you sent the cartoon from [the town of] Elazığ is enough to make [me] forget all the mistakes."[41]

That said, there were also occasions, though rare, in which ironic and encouraging remarks were left aside and amateurs were severely rebuked. In an issue of January 1981, for example, a message appeared in the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page concerning a cartoon that had not been published because it was an obvious case of plagiarism. The message made clear that "your picture was copied (*lit*. exactly taken) from a French cartoonist. Mind you don't do it again."[42]

The tough tone of the comments mirrored Aral's attitude to a great extent. Aral gave amateurs an enormous chance, but this was not unconditional. As much as he put energy into following, forming, and helping these young amateurs, he also expected them to be as serious and determined in cartooning as he himself was. Many of his colleagues and disciples recall him taking his job in an extremely serious way, smiling on rare occasions and always being very demanding. Aral could make one draw the same cartoon up to fifteen times in a row if he was not satisfied with it. But it was hardly a matter of personal taste, rather a question of style and technique.[43] In other words, he was severe, but with good intentions.

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[39] *Gırgır*, November 28 1982.
[40] *Gırgır*, January 30 1983.
[41] *Gırgır*, September 6 1981.
[42] *Gırgır*, January 25 1981.
[43] Murat Kürüz, *Son Efsane Gırgır* (Istanbul, 2007), 13; Cihan Demirci, in a private interview with the author (December 12 2011); and Behiç Pek, in a private interview with the author (July 14 2014).

Harsh, encouraging, ironic, or ambiguous as they might have been, these comments should be deemed a precious part of the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page, and in general of the magazine. Actually, while obviously being addressed to the authors of specific cartoons, they were also the space through which *Gırgır* established the most direct contact with the readership.

Aral and the whole *Gırgır* team could have easily decided to publish the amateurs' cartoons without comments, forwarding the suggestions for improvement privately, as it was anyway the case for the majority of them. It should not be forgotten, in fact, that the cartoons that were published in this page were only a minimum part of those that the amateur cartoonists submitted to the magazine every week, and before obtaining one publication the amateur artists experienced a long period of training, during which they received comments and suggestions by the *Gırgır* professionals. Aral could have decided to avoid the publication of the comments, for they were a private matter between the magazine and each cartoonist. Moreover, he could have decided not to publish these early-stage cartoons at all and to start to make them appear on the magazine from the semi-amateur level, which did not require commentaries. However, the amateur cartoons and their comments were intentionally maintained until the end, and Aral's merit lies exactly in this policy.

The publication of amateurs' cartoons must be seen as performing the specific function of bridging the physical and professional distance between the magazine and the people. In fact, the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* essentially put ordinary people in professionals' shoes. In this respect, the comments were an additional aspect that strengthened this function, since they proved that professionals valued the amateurs, hence common people, highly. Being a bridge within a bridge, the comments were precious as they created a virtual platform for dialogue between the magazine and its readership, a platform whose dynamism evolved issue after issue.

If we attempt to trace the reasons for the long-lasting existence of the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page, with its cartoons and comments, two main explanations emerge. One is that there are strong reasons to believe that, from a financial point of view, this page played an important role in terms of sales. It did so for three main reasons.

First, it is easy to imagine that the average reader was curious to find out which amateur cartoons had secured a place on the pages of the upcoming issue, and how these cartoons had been judged by the experts. It is perhaps no exaggeration to go as far as supposing that, at least to some extent, the readership identified themselves with these

"popular heroes" who had conquered a spot in the magazine. After all, the same admiration for *Gırgır* that pushed thousands to submit their cartoons was felt also by those who simply enjoyed reading the magazine without necessarily delighting in creating their own cartoons.

Furthermore, in addition to the readers the page also attracted those who aspired to make their own cartoons and show them to *Gırgır*'s editor for the first time. This category was presumably interested in observing the works of successful amateurs and the comments that appeared at their side, as they would serve as positive (or, in some case, negative) examples from which to draw useful lessons.

Finally, there is little doubt that the amateurs themselves played a determining role in the sales success. In fact, it was common for those who succeeded in being published to buy as many copies as possible of the issue in which their cartoons appeared – something that, years later, some of them amusingly recall having done.[44] Considering both amateur and semi-amateur cartoons, potentially about twenty people can be estimated to have been "*Gırgır* hunting" every week.

The second reason for the existence of the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* – and, in this case, the back cover too – goes beyond considerations of a financial nature and is to be found in Aral's own philosophy. Severe as he might have appeared, Aral was a generous-hearted man who held the youth in high esteem. As the experiences of Demirci and Kürüz testify, cartoonists could have the opportunity to begin their career as amateurs as young as sixteen; consequently, they could come to form part of *Gırgır*'s permanent staff while they were still in their teens, hence when they were very young.

The columnist and professor of English literature Murat Belge recalls an occasion on which he asked Aral to explain the recruitment of such young cartoonists. The latter reportedly replied that, in a country where very few doors were opened to the new generations, he meant to give the youth hope, show an interest in their creativity, and give them a concrete chance. Aral explained that many of these youngsters wanted to become cartoonists merely because someone, namely himself, was offering them the chance to do so; likewise, had someone else provided them with other prospects, they would have probably followed alternative directions.[45]

It seems clear that Aral sincerely believed in the great potential of young people. This is why, for instance, he let Kürüz join the amateurs' table on his first day at *Gırgır*'s

[44] Cihan Demirci, in a private interview with the author (February 28 2011); also, Murat Kürüz, *Son Efsane Gırgır* (Istanbul, 2007).
[45] Belge, Murat, "Karikatür Serüveni", in *Karikatürkiye. Karikatürlerle Cumhuriyet Tarihi. 1923-2008*, ed. Turgut Çeviker (Istanbul, 2010), pp. 31-45, 31.

headquarters, notwithstanding the fact that he had skipped the routine procedures. Correspondingly, this is also why Aral was so severe with those who copied foreign cartoons for the mere satisfaction of appearing on the magazine. Altogether, through the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page, Aral responded to virtually anyone who earnestly longed for a chance. Conceivably, this was his most ambitious "mission" – greater than the popularisation of satire.

In the light of the considerations above, the mechanism that was set up through the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* and the back cover shall be deemed an authentic revolution, for no other magazine had ever before formed a professional team from its own readership in such a direct way. Besides, these two spaces added another original merit to the magazine, which concerned its geographical connotation. That is to say, although being Istanbul-based, the fact that *Gırgır* printed cartoons that were made all over the country contributed to the spread of cultural initiatives at national level, overcoming that "Istanbul-centricity" that had traditionally characterised the satirical – and, in general, the cultural – landscape of Turkey.

As far as the 1980-1983 period is specifically concerned, the amateur and semi-amateur spaces were maintained as such during the military regime. This fact was extraordinarily important for several reasons. First, the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page and the back cover preserved that direct interchange between the masses and culture that the regime was so vehemently trying to supress. Furthermore, by publishing cartoons that came from all over Turkey (and even from Turkish citizens abroad, in particular from Cyprus and Germany), the magazine contributed to the circulation of information and opinions among people from every corner of the country, during a period in which the restrictions imposed by the military on the means of communication were leaving some provinces and regions relatively isolated. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, since the satire made by amateurs and semi-amateurs covered all the themes that were treated by *Gırgır*'s professionals, including political issues, the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* space and the back cover assured common citizens, in the guise of cartoonists, a freedom of expression that the authoritarian regime generally denied elsewhere.

In conclusion, the two spaces through which the magazine used to give voice to common people never ceased to represent a glimmer of hope in many ways, notwithstanding the hard times brought about by the military rule.

Voice of the oppressed: prison cartoons

Aral's commitment to open the doors of the magazine to people who did not form part of *Gırgır*'s permanent staff was not limited to the ordinary citizens who were amateurs or semi-amateurs hoping to eventually become professional cartoonists. *Gırgır* also published cartoons drawn by people who were detained in prison, in a few cases professional cartoonists but for the most part amateurs.

As in the case of the illustrations of amateurs and semi-amateurs, also the prison cartoons began to reach *Gırgır*'s headquarters in the mid-1970s. The creators of these cartoons were people who had been arrested for their political ideas, rather than illegal activities, and they ranged from young students to unionists and intellectuals. These prisoners had no professional connection with the art of cartooning and, conceivably, they had never thought about drawing cartoons before. In fact, there are reasons to believe that the first prisoners who began to send their cartoons to the magazine were inspired by the fact that (free) non-professional cartoonists were given a chance of visibility on the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page, thus they were presumably encouraged by the idea that this space could also provide them with this opportunity.

Aral explained that in the first years the flow of cartoons from prison was very limited and their quality was rather poor, with the pictures usually being scribbled on small pieces of paper and made with rudimentary materials. What the *Gırgır* staff decided to do at that stage was to forward a letter to each prisoner who had sent in a cartoon, to provide them with explanations of the basic principles of cartooning and the necessary equipment to draw. In addition, these letters were accompanied by letters addressed to the directors of the prisons, in which *Gırgır*'s team praised the latter for allowing the packages to reach the detainees.[46]

Hundreds of letters and materials were sent to prisons across the country; however, in spite of the requests addressed to prison staff, only a few were actually delivered to the prisoners. The majority failed to reach their intended destination and, in some case, they were even sent back. Nonetheless, the staff of *Gırgır* never renounced this mission and pursued the correspondence with patience and determination in the name of the few prisoners who actually managed to communicate with them.[47]

[46] Oğuz Aral in Various Artists, *İçerden Dışarıya Sevgilerle Karikatür Sergisi. 24 Hapisaneden Karikatürler* (Istanbul, 1986), pp. 5-6.
[47] Oğuz Aral in Various Artists, *İçerden Dışarıya Sevgilerle Karikatür Sergisi. 24 Hapisaneden Karikatürler* (Istanbul, 1986), p. 6.

Aral began to publish these cartoons in the mid-1970s under the name of *mapusaneden karikatürler*,[48] which literally means "cartoons from prison"; he also described their authors as part of the *mapusane kuşağı*,[49] "prison generation". The word "mapusane" is the familiar counterpart of "hapishane", the official word used in Turkish language to refer to prisons and jails. Interestingly, Aral used it not only in *Gırgır* but also in more formal contexts, such as in interviews and books.[50] These expressions deserves attention for the simple yet meaningful reason that a nickname for "prison" existed and had become common in that period, which reveals quite significantly how familiar the prison experience was in the collective imagery of the nation; how common and easy it could be for anybody to be imprisoned, or to have relatives and acquaintances who found themselves in jail.

The cartoons from prison were integrated in the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page and back cover, according to the level of expertise of their authors. As in the case of the other amateur or semi-amateur illustrations, they appeared along with the name and surname of their authors. What made them easily distinguishable from the others, though, was the place of origin, which was the name of their detention centre rather than their city or neighbourhood.

Under the military rule the number of cartoonists from prison rose substantially. While in the late 1970s the number of people who longed to have their work printed in the amateur and semi-amateur spaces had primarily increased in relation to the success of the magazine, in the aftermath of September 12 the cartoons from prison experienced a boom as a consequence of the fact that a high number of people found themselves in jail. In fact, let us recall that under the regime Turkey saw mass imprisonment: intellectuals were arrested for their opinions, students for their readings, and people in general according to the political inclination suggested by their look. In brief, between 1980 and 1983 not only were those involved in illegal activities crowding Turkish prisons, but also, and above all, people who had somehow manifested sympathy for politics, in particular leftist ideas. These were the multitude of victims of repression, of that "depoliticisation at any cost" that the military government put into practice.

[48] In the main text I intentionally reproduced the word *mapushane* with the missing letter "h" because this is how Aral writes it in his texts. The missing letter is not a spelling mistake; on the contrary, it should be understood as conforming to a trend of *Gırgır*'s style, namely that of deliberately misspelling words for comic effect or to make them sound more familiar. In the cartoon analysis of the next chapters we will come across intentionally misspelled terms a number of times.
[49] *Idem.*
[50] Cf. the preface of Various Artists, *İçerden Dışarıya Sevgilerle Karikatür Sergisi. 24 Hapisaneden Karikatürler* (Istanbul, 1986), pp. 5-8.

Predictably, communication between prisoners and the outer world was systematically hampered, making the circulation of letters to and from *Gırgır* more difficult than before. Above all, Aral revealed that it became impossible to communicate with Ankara's Mamak jail, Metris prison in Istanbul, and the prison of Diyarbakır.[51] Yet, despite all these difficulties, *Gırgır*'s staff pursued the correspondence nonetheless.

During the regime, the mechanism of publication for the cartoonists who drew from prison, which we will refer to as the "prison generation", was similar to the one put in practice for the other amateurs of the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page, albeit with some differences.

First, it was similar in terms of the training that preceded the first publication, since detainees trained themselves according to the comments and directions provided by experienced cartoonists. The "training by correspondence", that is to say through the technical advice offered by the *Gırgır* team, was a system that applied to all prison cartoonists. This was true at least in theory; for, in practice, many prison directors and guards did not deliver the mail to the detainees, as just mentioned.

In addition, on some occasions exchanges could take place in person, too. In fact, it could happen that amateurs and semi-amateurs whose works had already appeared on the magazine were arrested, especially for reasons other than their illustrations. While in jail, these cartoonists put their skills at the service of other prisoners, helping them to meet *Gırgır*'s publication standards. So, some jailed amateurs could also benefit from the direct lessons (advice) of cartoonists who were (at least a little) more experienced than them.

To some extent, however, the path to publication was also different from that of free amateurs and semi-amateurs: prisoners' cartoons were published at an earlier stage, that is to say, without long waiting periods even though their standard was often lower than those of the other *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler*. The reason for this policy lies in the objective that was at the very origin of their publication, namely to provide these prisoners with a platform to communicate with the outside.

A second similarity in the mechanism of publication of free and imprisoned amateurs' cartoons concerns personal progress. While some prison cartoonists tried only one publication, others established a regular (conditions allowing) correspondence with the magazine. The ability of the latter improved with time and their name began to appear

[51] Oğuz Aral in Various Artists, *İçerden Dışarıya Sevgilerle Karikatür Sergisi. 24 Hapisaneden Karikatürler* (Istanbul, 1986), 6.

relatively often in the amateur and semi-amateur spaces. In the end, their cartoons came to be published not only to allow these individuals to express themselves from behind bars, but also for their quality.

Third, a further common feature was the opportunity to become a permanent member of *Gırgır*'s staff, provided that these cartoonists were eventually released from prison. Thus, it could happen (and in fact did)[52] that amateurs who became acquainted with the art of cartooning while in prison would start contributing permanently to the magazine after their release.

Notwithstanding the fact that the quantity of cartoons that were sent from prisons was significantly lower than the cartoons drawn by free amateurs and semi-amateurs, the space that the magazine devoted to the former was far from sufficient to display them all. The number of prison cartoons published in each *Gırgır* issue between 1980 and 1983 oscillated between one and two, it was rarely higher. Aral explained that he did not publish more cartoons from prison in the same issue for space constraints, and because it was not his intention to turn *Gırgır* in a *mapusane dergisi*, a "prison magazine".[53] As is illustrated in the following chapter, the pages of *Gırgır* hosted a wide range of satirical appointments of various kinds, all of which required a specific space; for Aral, the cartoons from prison had to fit the format like all the others.

Prison cartoons exhibition and catalogue

Aral's decision to limit the presence of prison cartoons in *Gırgır* does not mean that he undervalued their importance. That the opposite is true is testified by his decision to display them in an exhibition; for, in his words, "we didn't find it right to keep such incredible satire and cartoons, that have no equal in the whole world, confined within the borders of *Gırgır*

[52] Erhan Başkurt, Avni Odabaşı and Orhan Çoğupluğil are the most famous examples of cartoonists who took their first steps in this career while imprisoned, and thanks to *Gırgır*. Başkurt joined Aral after his release and worked by his side until the sale of the magazine in 1989; Odabaşı is currently a professional cartoonist based in Germany; and Çoğupluğil is an established cartoon artist (under the name Coplu) in Canada, with temporary exhibitions all over the world. Seyit Ali Aral, in a private interview with the author (January 11 2012); Orhan Çoğupluğil, in private correspondence with the author (2013-2014); and Avni Odabaşı, in private correspondence with the author (2014).

[53] Oğuz Aral in Various Artists, *İçerden Dışarıya Sevgilerle Karikatür Sergisi. 24 Hapisaneden Karikatürler* (Istanbul, 1986), 6.

magazine."[54] This idea was elaborated during the regime; however, predictably, its organisation proved impossible in that era. The exhibition finally opened in 1986, first in Istanbul and then in Ankara.

The exhibition had its advantages compared to the magazine, and also a different function. First, it allowed the display of a large number of cartoons at the same time, being entirely dedicated to the ones sent in from the prisoners. Second, once all the permits to hold the exhibition had been obtained it meant that the authorities had accepted its existence, so the risk of closure was relatively low after that stage; while, on the contrary, the magazine was threatened by censorship at every release, depending on the content of each issue. Third, the exhibition was conceived as a social event. That is, while the reading of the magazine generated a process of individual perception for the single reader, the exhibition room allowed people, even those who did not know each other, to gather in front of the cartoons, communicate, and share their thoughts and feelings. In that way, not only did a mutual dialogue between the cartoon and every single member of the public take place, but also a collective comprehension.

The exhibition also had its disadvantages, however, which included the enormous difficulties in the organisation that preceded the opening. For obvious reasons, until November 1983 it was impossible to obtain permission to hold such an exhibition. However, problems remained after the end of the military rule, even though military control was no longer threatening Istanbul.

Aral recalls that, above all, finding a suitable exhibition space, of the right dimensions and location, proved impossible for a long time. After a lengthy search, he resorted to the Journalists Association, with the idea that the exhibition could also be promoted as a press event. Initially, the president of the association showed great interest, but he laid down as a condition the fact that the exhibition had to be composed of cartoons that had already appeared in *Gırgır*. Aral accepted this condition, as it gave visibility to at least a portion of the cartoons from prison and could eventually pave the way for a further exhibition that included the unpublished ones. However, it was later announced that the issue had been discussed in the board of directors and that they were not able to fulfil this duty. After that, Aral's team resorted to the exhibition company TÜYAP, where they encountered unexpected

[54] Oğuz Aral in Various Artists, *İçerden Dışarıya Sevgilerle Karikatür Sergisi. 24 Hapisaneden Karikatürler* (Istanbul, 1986), back cover.

determination.[55] It was thanks to TÜYAP that, finally, the exhibition entitled *İcerden Dışarıya Sevgilerle 24 Hapishaneden Karikatürler* (Cartoons from 24 Prisons, From Inside to the Outside with Love) was opened.

The exhibition was advertised in some newspapers but most of the publicity came through *Gırgır* itself. The people of Istanbul showed an interest that the staff in charge of the exhibition room claimed never to have seen before for a temporary exhibition. In the end, 15,000 people are said to have attended over four days.

Due to the success of the exhibition in Istanbul, Aral decided to hold the exhibition in other cities too. He agreed, together with the president of the Society of Contemporary Journalists, to move it to the capital city. Initially, in Ankara it proved hard to find a suitable exhibition space; however, the team finally managed to hire the exhibition room of the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unionists (Türk-İş). The exhibition was arranged in one night and, for the following four days it attracted even more spectators than in Istanbul, with a total of 25,000 visitors.

With *İçerden Dışarıya Sevgilerle 24 Hapisaneden Karikatürler*, Aral holds the record of having organised the first exhibition in the world to display cartoons made in prisons.[56] This record was further proof of his engagement in that special mission that went beyond the aim of promoting cartoons for the mere sake of contributing to the art form.

Initially, by encouraging these prisoners to make cartoons and by providing them with the necessary tools to fulfil this aim, Aral gave them the opportunity to express themselves without recourse to words or written texts. In this way the prison generation learnt to adopt the line and humour to assert their presence and ideas. Significantly, Aral reports:

> "[T]he majority of the people who sent in their cartoons [from prison] think about it in this way. They say: 'Had I worked on cartoons, I would have not found myself in jail after all. The risk that I ran and the difficulties that I endured to be able to say with words one tenth of what I said with this [one] cartoon were dreadful. What a wonderful thing it is to draw cartoons! We are men who gambled

[55] Oğuz Aral in Various Artists, *İçerden Dışarıya Sevgilerle Karikatür Sergisi. 24 Hapisaneden Karikatürler* (Istanbul, 1986), 6-7.
[56] Mithat Solmaz, in a private interview with the author (March 24 2014); Bozkurt Belibağlı, in private correspondence with the author (2013-2014); and Metin Cedden, in private correspondence with the author (2013-2014).

eight years [of our lives] for writing on paper and circulating the things that in cartoons [can] exist...'"[57]

Afterwards, by publishing and displaying these cartoons, Aral contributed to relieve prisoners' anxiety of being held in a condition that denied their basic rights, and to break the wall of silence that separated them from the rest of the world.

Aral's mission with respect to political prisoners and the youth becomes clear in a declaration that is reported in the exhibition catalogue. Here Aral criticises the indifference that people show to each other in general, and that Turkish society shows to the younger generations in particular. In the last part of the interview he denounces this indifference and explains that the exhibition was conceived as a way to fight it:

"... [W]hy didn't we show an interest in these people? When I was a child, there was one characteristic peculiar to the Anatolian people: those who were ill in our neighbourhood would not be left without a bowl of soup. Such was our concern about mankind and the world that I remember seeing people crying in the streets of Istanbul when Kennedy was shot. I [now] see a society that has lost many of its living, human sides. The last twenty years, in a way that increased especially after March 12 [1971], saw the beginning of a global assault according to the philosophy of "making a fortune at any cost", and of "getting what you want, fast". We began to hear more and more often proverbs like "every sheep is hanged by its own leg", "may the snake that does not bite me live a thousand years", "[may] the horse [go in the hands of] him who can ride and the sword [in the hands of] him who can gird it on". People now addressed to themselves the interest that they had once had in the neighbourhood, with the object of making good. They began to think day and night about how to make fortune. The ill in the neighbourhood were left without soup...

... However, later on it became clear that those who really made a fortune were very exceptional examples. It was not that easy for everyone to do well. Seeing that fortune did not come as quickly as expected, also the interests that individuals had addressed to themselves began to disappear. They were replaced by a big sense of emptiness, alienation, of being lost, above all indifference. You

[57] Oğuz Aral in Various Artists, *İçerden Dışarıya Sevgilerle Karikatür Sergisi. 24 Hapisaneden Karikatürler* (Istanbul, 1986), 7.

see, this young generation is timely for this period, which is the one of profound indifference. Young people are the ones who need the most attention. Young people want to feel themselves belonging somewhere. Even a tiny bit of advice can help them find their own path.

... This exhibition has been a very simple, yet very interesting example of this attention. A two-page letter, ink, some white paper, an eraser, pencil... And, from time to time, the publication of one of the cartoons that were sent, and words that manifested interest. We did not do much more, I guess. These young people did the rest."

He then concludes:

"... This is my opinion: if this exhibition could be realised in such a difficult environment, who knows what these people could do with the support of their families, the institutions and the government... We are responsible for a young generation that was ruined, and I think this was done on purpose...

... This exhibition catalogue will be an interesting document not only for the history of Turkish humour but also our political history."[58]

In fact, the exhibition and its catalogue reiterated the value of the prison cartoons in the post-1983 era. The exhibition came at a time when many taboos still existed about the military rule; therefore, it proved an important platform to question these taboos and carry on the prison generation's struggle *a posteriori*. The catalogue, then, contributed to systematically inscribe these cartoons in the collective memory of the country. Both the exhibition and the catalogue kept the political engagement of the prisoner-cartoonists alive, showing future generations the transformation of these political prisoners from victims into heroes.

The political value of the prison cartoons during the regime

The incisive discussion quoted above is representative of the attitude and belief that characterised Aral's whole approach. He believed deeply in solidarity, in people's power, and

[58] Oğuz Aral in Various Artists, *İçerden Dışarıya Sevgilerle Karikatür Sergisi. 24 Hapisaneden Karikatürler* (Istanbul, 1986), 8.

in the younger generations; he saw himself and his peers as having a moral duty of trusting the youth, encouraging them in finding their own path, and supporting them in their choices. In this respect, he considered adults to be in charge of the destiny of the youth, but he also had the modesty of attributing the success of the latter only to their own efforts.

The whole set of activities that surrounded the prison cartoons (training, publication, exhibition, and catalogue) may be seen as Aral's highest achievement, from a cultural perspective but also in political terms. In fact, even though the exhibition and catalogue were realised after the end of the regime, the whole system through which the production of the cartoons from prison was encouraged and the fact that they were published throughout the entire period of military rule proved extremely important for several reasons. To begin with, by establishing communication between its staff and the cartoonists, *Gırgır* manifested interest and solidarity to these prisoners. In the second place, by teaching them cartooning techniques, it encouraged them to defend their own opinions and to adopt new ways of expressing them. Moreover, by publishing and exhibiting their cartoons, it provided them with a platform to communicate with the outside world. And to conclude, by allowing the most talented of these cartoonists to become part of the permanent staff of the magazine once they were released, it gave them a chance for the future.

While rightly praising *Gırgır* and Aral's efforts, we should not underestimate the political value of the actual agents of the prison cartoons, namely the political prisoners who took over cartooning during their detention. Through this art, these prisoners came to openly challenge the regime. In fact, considering that they had been arrested for political reasons, their decision to make political cartoons was, indeed, a way to rebel against the depoliticisation and silence that the military power was trying to impose on intellectuals and society.[59]

The simple decision to make these cartoons was itself a statement, as it proved that these authors were elaborating means of intellectual and political dissent, and hence that they did not fear repressive measures in spite of the risk of worsening their circumstances in prison. In addition, sending the cartoons to *Gırgır* for publication elevated these acts of dissent to a new level, which marked the engagement of the prisoner-cartoonists in a struggle

[59] The content analysis of these cartoons is omitted here as it will be treated extensively in Chapter 5. On the issue see also Valentina Marcella, "Smuggling Intellectual Freedom under Physical Constraint: The Enemy's Body in Turkish Prison Cartoons", In *Entre traces mémorielles et marques corporelles. Regards sur l'ennemi de l'Antiquité à nos jours*, ed. Jean-Claude Caron, Laurent Lamoine and Natividad Planas (Clermont-Ferrand, 2014), pp. 243-257.

that was deliberately and explicitly against the regime. That is to say, once a cartoon reached the headquarters of the magazine, it was likely to be published; in this way the prisoner-cartoonist's struggle ceased to be confined to the realm of the jailed intellectual and gained a new collective dimension that involved the wider public of *Gırgır*'s readership, thus virtually everyone.

Concluding remarks on the specificity of *Gırgır*

By encouraging the cartoons made by amateurs, semi-amateurs and prisoners, and by publishing them between 1980 and 1983, Aral made an inestimable contribution to keeping the satirical production not only alive but also very lively. The intrinsic complicity between the individual cartoonists, *Gırgır*'s staff, and the readership that was implied in the very existence of the cartoons of the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler*, of the back cover, and those of the "prison generation" was a meaningful "slap in the face" to the efforts of the military regime to control society and culture.

CHAPTER 3
GIRGIR IN THE YEARS 1980 TO 1983

Between 1980 and 1983 *Gırgır* looked more like a newspaper than any weekly magazine of the time. In terms of its size, it was midway between the standard newspapers and satirical magazines, its pages measuring 33 by 27 centimetres. To a great extent, in 1980 *Gırgır* retained the same pamphlet-look as its first incarnation as a supplement of *Gün* back in 1971, the only remarkable difference being the number of pages, which rose gradually from twelve to sixteen between 1980 and 1983.

The cover page

The cover page comprised one single full-page cartoon that was usually dedicated to the most significant issue to have occupied the public debate during the week – such as the changing regulations in the supervision of school exams, or the constitutional referendum, to mention but two examples (Fig. 1).

At the top of the page was a banner with the title, which included the price of the magazine and the issue number, as well as stating that *Gırgır* was issued on Sundays (Fig. 2).

Under the banner was the magazine's subtitle: *Gırgır: kendi halinde bir mizah dergisidir*. It should be noted that the subtitle was intentionally ambiguous. That is, while its literal translation is "a satirical magazine in its own way", the words "kendi halinde" form an expression that, itself, means "quiet and inoffensive". Thus, it may be claimed that the subtitle was meant as a verbal introduction to the magazine that, on the one hand, emphasised its originality (compared to previous satirical trends, as was explained in the previous chapter), and, on the other, declared its innocence with respect to its content.

This second meaning certainly changed with time, together with the evolution of the satirical slant of the magazine. Whereas in the first years of *Gırgır* (when its cartoons revolved around sexuality, and women were portrayed as objects of desire) the claims that it was "quiet and inoffensive" mostly alluded to the representations of men's attitudes with respect to the female body, with the later politicisation of its satire it came to refer to the political matters portrayed. In both cases, the claim of innocence is ironic, as, on the contrary,

the satire that characterised the magazine was highly critical and deliberately so, as the following analysis will show.

The top right of the banner above the full-page cartoon, then, was filled by a small illustration that certainly deserves more than the mere indifference with which previous analyses have treated it. It deserves attention as it does not represent any specific *Gırgır* character, however, nor is not a logo. Actually, although several characters became mascots with time, *Gırgır* never had a "logo" in the literal sense of the word. Rather, the official branding mark of the magazine was (and always remained) the word "Gırgır" itself – more precisely, the peculiar style in which it was written.[1] But if not a logo, then, what does this small illustration stand for?

The image (Fig. 3) shows the head of a man whose brain is being activated by a hand, which manually winds a crank. The expression "Gır!" is repeated several times and appears by both the man's head and the winding crank, suggesting that the "Gır! Gır! Gır! ..." is the sound produced in the act of getting the brain to work.

The transcription clearly evokes the name of the magazine. However, it would not do justice to the cartoon to assume that it simply explains the meaning of the magazine's name. It is certainly true that the word "gırgır" means "tiresome noise, rasping sound" and that the action that is provoked in the caricature produces a tiresome repetitive noise; in fact, it is no coincidence that the monosyllabic "gır" also appears in the dictionaries as a word that carries its own meaning, that is, as the onomatopoeic "sound of a snarl". Nevertheless, the word "gırgır" could have stood as a name by itself, hinting that the magazine is named after it because its satire is like a tiresome noise, thus annoying and biting.[2] Instead, the presence of the cartoon together with the name carries an added value, which might be defined as a visual declaration of intent. That is: the purpose of the magazine is to embody the external hand that stimulates brain activity, in other words to make people think, reflect, and understand through its irritating and unpleasant, angry satire.

This cartoon appears beside the title and slogan of the magazine not only on the cover page, but every time they appear in the inner pages, too. Its regular presence confirms that the

[1] The visual style of the word "*Gırgır*" was such a landmark that many of the satirical magazines founded on the *Gırgır* model in the mid-1980s later took up not only its satirical line but also the look of its name, supposedly with the belief that this icon would automatically ensure success. In some cases the imitation went further, as in the case of *Hıbır*, *Zıpır* and *Dıgıl*. It is however necessary to clarify that *Hıbır* was founded by Oğuz Aral himself, after leaving *Gırgır* in 1989.

[2] For all definitions cfr. the entries "gır" and "gırgır" in the Turkish-English dictionary *Redhouse Yeni. Türkçe-İngilizce Sözlük*.

name, the slogan and the little cartoon are bound to each other and constitute a unified identity.

In addition, this small yet meaningful illustration proves that the translation of the name of the magazine into "fun", which is often proposed in articles on *Gırgır*, is incorrect, as it denotes only its comic aspect.[3] In the hasty choice of "fun", both the onomatopoeic word and the sense of unpleasantness that it alludes to are lost in translation. In this respect a more successful option would be, for instance, "rasp". Yet, the specific space in which the caricature is set – on the front cover close to the essential information like the price and date, and every other time next to the name and slogan – urges the reader to integrate its message into the very same nature of the magazine. In this respect, we must admit that it is certainly complicated to convey the entertaining, critical and instructive nature of *Gırgır* in one word – a combination that fails to be expressed even in the Turkish original (hence, in all probability, the necessity for the cartoon). Nevertheless it is important for any study on the magazine to at least acknowledge the presence of this image, together with the fact that it is displayed there to state *Gırgır*'s aim of raising awareness.[4]

Inside the magazine

Between 1980 and 1983 the pages of *Gırgır* hosted an array of satiric contributions. First of all, it is necessary to clarify that written and graphic satire coexisted in the magazine. It is true that the latter was far more prominent and that this supremacy was a clear editorial choice; nevertheless, the written contributions still constituted a lively 20 per cent.[5]

[3] The only exception is the translation that appears in the *Historical Dictionary of Turkey* (Metin Heper and Nur Bilge Criss, Lanham: 2009) in the entry for "Gırgır". Here the authors pinpoint the flippancy of *Gırgır*'s satire with the English "tease", which, in spite of losing the acoustic subtlety, constitutes the most nuanced translation proposed to date.

[4] Another reason why it is astonishing to find no mention of this caricature in any work on *Gırgır*, including the ones in Turkish (which, for obvious reasons, do not have to deal with translation issues), is its multi-layered ambiguity. At visual level, even though the eyes of the man whose head is being cranked into motion seem to be caught in a mischievous look, his protruding ears and long tongue poking from his wide large-toothed smile convey an absent expression. Portraying the ideal reader as possibly silly is itself problematic. Moreover, if we add the presence of the external crank, the boundary between the latter's function of raising awareness and a possible manipulation of the readers' mind becomes extremely blurred. At linguistic level, then, the word "gır" carries additional meanings besides the primary "sound of a snarl". Among them it is impossible to ignore "fabricated", "gossip", "talk", and "lie". A combination of the visual and linguistic second reading could thus suggest that the magazine embodies an external hand that fills the empty heads of its readers with false information. Common sense is probably enough to argue against this interpretation, which clearly clashes with Aral's intentions and *Gırgır*'s philosophy. Still, the ambiguity of this cartoon highlights the need for further investigation into its codes and meaning.

[5] This figure was suggested by Cihan Demirci (in a private interview with the author, December 21 2011).

The written satire consisted mainly of short news stories that either reported ironically on real news items or were fake, absurd news, scoops, announcements and advertisements that mocked the real ones that used to be published in newspapers and non-satirical magazines. These reports were short (generally one to six sentences) and they were distributed throughout the magazine without following a specific criterion, usually filling the empty spaces between cartoons; they were also usually anonymous or signed with a humorous pseudonym, which added to the comic effect. Examples of such names include Ovuz Aral (Rubber Aral, instead of the actual Oğuz Aral), Dedikoducu Hayriye (Hayriye the Gossiper) and Nasreddin Hoca (Nasreddin Hodja, the ulema – who is believed to have lived in Anatolia in the thirteenth century, and who is the protagonist of an endless number of tales, anecdotes and jokes that are part of the oral tradition of several countries in the Middle East and Asia).

In addition, some of these "stories" were represented by fictional press releases, interviews and statements of renowned people. These included political figures,[6] football managers, businessmen, singers and other celebrities of that time. These news items were mere creations of *Gırgır*, which, however, pretended to report them faithfully from real facts.

In addition to the short news, written satire was represented by long texts (half a page, sometimes almost one page) written by non-professional satirists. These texts were usually published on page 10,[7] one per issue, along with the name, surname and place of origin (city or neighbourhood) of the writer. This fashion will remind the reader of the amateur and semi-amateur cartoons; in fact, these texts may be deemed their written counterpart.

The page 10 texts could take several satirical forms and targets. They could also comment on a very random set of issues, ranging from the absurd monologues of frustrated employees complaining about their superiors, to reports on funny episodes experienced in real life, and open letters that reflected the desolation of Turkish society due to the economic state of the country. The tone could be very bitter; at the same time, the issues commented on were presented in a skilfully ironic way.

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[6] The political figures who became the subjects of *Gırgır*'s satire between 1980 and 1983 were to a large extent the local politicians and the civil officers that came to fill relevant posts under the military government, for instance those who were put in charge of the financial reforms, those who were appointed to draft the new constitution, and those who were entrusted with the new university system. A clearer picture of the targeted politicians will emerge in the following pages, particularly in Chapter 4.

[7] The precise space covered by a specific satirical contribution within the magazine will be clarified whenever possible throughout this work, as in the case of the amateur and semi-amateur cartoons in Chapter 2. However, when a regular item is mentioned with no reference to a page number, the reader should assume that its location changed randomly in every issue.

Moreover, another portion of the 20 per cent of written satire was constituted by the jokes and witticisms that were published in the column called *Fıkralar* (Jokes), on page 4. Every week this column hosted up to eight short jokes, which were all sent in by readers and were ranked by the *Gırgır* staff according to their wit. The latter was expressed through simple icons of faces in the act of laughing, smiling, or looking perplexed, according to the quality of the joke.

Having discussed the behind-the-scenes of the amateur and semi-amateur cartoons in the previous chapter, as well as the page 10 text, and finally the above-mentioned reader's jokes column, it should be clear by now that the involvement of the public in the making of the magazine was not simply an important aspect but a truly founding principle of *Gırgır*.

Graphic satire was promoted in the magazine in several forms. A first differentiation needs to be made between illustrations and photography. In fact, even though drawn satire was unquestionably predominant, from time to time the magazine delighted the reader with black-and-white photographs of famous people, too.

In most cases the photographs were published alongside the news items that were mentioned above, and the subjects were the same, namely politicians, sportsmen and the "stars of the stage". Nevertheless, these pictures did not necessarily require any captions or text in order to provoke laughs, for the subjects were already displayed in ways that were amusing. For example, they could be captured with a funny expression on their face, sporting an unusual hairstyle, or an eccentric item of clothing, or perhaps shown in a clumsy position or comic situation.

In a way, these pictures were a legacy of the extensive use of photography that had characterised the first years of the magazine, and, one could say, a tribute to those photomontages that had made *Gırgır* its fortune (as explained in Chapter 2). That said, between 1980 and 1983 *Gırgır* recurred to this visual source only on rare occasions and definitely less than once per issue. Unmistakably, its richest satirical tools were the illustrations.

Concerning the drawn contributions, a distinction shall be made between single cartoons, on the one hand, and recurring features, on the other. Leaving aside the stand-alone cartoons for the moment, the regular spaces that were proposed every week were either appointments with the same cartoon or, more originally, with the same cartoonist. An example is the untitled page 6 column, for which the cartoonist Sarkis Paçaci used to provide three to five cartoons every week, bringing to life anonymous characters that changed every

time. It is true that on some occasions the same character would appear more than once in this column within the same issue, however there was never any continuity; on the contrary, the narratives were always detached and expressed their own humour.

Another example of a space being reserved for a cartoonist was the seventh page, which was often[8] occupied by a full-page cartoon by Oğuz Aral. These cartoons reflected on a different theme (music, summer holidays, Istanbul in the future and marketing, among others) by portraying a crowd with different groups of people in the act of doing or saying something related to the chosen theme. The characters were standardised in order to imply ordinary people, they also changed every time, and had no name; hence, they were not involved in any systematic narrative.

A further example was the column of the cartoonist Hasan Kaçan, whose space alternated between (and sometimes combined) random cartoons, both single and strips, with cartoons that displayed a given set of characters.

The regular spaces with the same cartoon were certainly more common than those with the same cartoonist, and were of two types. One was the cartoon series in the strictest sense, which consisted of the visual narration of on-going stories whose plot was resumed in every issue, and sometimes also at various times within the same issue. The series published in the 1980-1983 period were *Utanmaz Adam* (Shameless Man) by Oğuz Aral, *En Kahraman Rıdvan* (The Bravest Angel) by Bülent Arabacıoğlu, *Beter Hamdi* (The Worse Hamdi) and *İpsiz Osman* (Osman the Vagabond), both written by Orhan Alev and designed by Şevket Yalaz[9], *Zalim Şevki* (Unjust Desire) by Engin Ergönültaş, *Milli Piyango* (National Lottery) by İlban Ertem, and *Nazi Altınları* (The Gold of the Nazi) written by Orhan Alev and drawn by Ergün Gündüz.

The other kind of regular contributions with the same cartoon consisted in columns in which every week the reader found the same subjects caught up in a new situation, whose development started and ended on that page; thus, with no continuity of narration between preceding and following issues. This was the case of comic strips such as *Avni* (Avni) by Oğuz Aral, *Çılgın Bediş* (Wild Bediş) by Özden Öğruk, and *Biraz da Savaşalım* (Let's Fight a Little Bit) by Behiç Pek. Every time the main characters of these strips were at the centre of a

[8] This page made its debut in mid-1982 and began to appear quite regularly, but not necessarily every week. By portraying the liveliness of the *mahalle*, the cartoon paid homage to Cemal Nadir.
[9] In 1983 Ergün Gündüz replaced Şevket Yalaz as graphic designer of *İpsiz Osman*.

new short episode that enhanced a particularly comic aspect of their personality, with which the readership was already familiar.[10]

Along the same lines there was also the page of *Muhlis Bey* (Mister Muhlis) by Latif Demirci, where every week Mister Muhlis either became the protagonist of a new comic strip or simply commented on others' stories and news, like a (comic) narrator. Another regular feature with no continuity in the narration was the *Dünyanın En İleri Zekalı Gerisi* (The World's Most Advanced Regressed) cartoon. Here, the cartoonist Porof used to portray the latest inventions in order to show their uselessness and denounce the inability of people, society, and the ruling class to progress. In this case the reader knew that the humour was generated by the relationship between humans and machines; but, instead of always having the same people as protagonists, the focus was on the inventions, which changed every week, while the characters had a secondary role that was functional only in relation to the objects.

Going back to the random cartoons, then, *Gırgır* presented a vast array of single cartoons, caricatures, and short comic strips, the latter were usually made of two or three scenes, and on rare occasions up to five. These were stand-alone illustrations and their humour could also be enjoyed by the uninitiated reader as either no background knowledge of the characters was required, or the protagonists embodied some well-known figures with which any reader would be familiar.[11]

The styles, characters, themes, aesthetic and linguistic devices displayed in these random cartoons were of the most disparate nature and responded to several different satirical mechanisms that would be impossible to analyse under a single logic. The major distinction, though, was indeed between humour and satire: the former had a merely entertaining purpose, whereas the latter was adopted in cartoons intended to express criticism about a certain issue. Further classifications will emerge in the following chapters.

The categorisation that was presented in the previous pages is nothing more than a panoramic look that provides a hint of the variety of satirical genres that appeared in *Gırgır* during the military regime, but certainly does not do justice to their richness and specificity.

[10] *Avni* and *Çılgın Bediş* were based on one precise main character (Avni and Bediş, respectively), while the protagonists of *Biraz da Savaşalım* were soldiers who always had similar features but who were not necessarily the same. The profile of these soldiers will be extensively discussed in Chapter 6.

[11] It should be recalled that, as explained in Chapter 2, *Gırgır*'s satire was made for a target audience of ordinary people with no particular level of education or expertise; so, even the comics that made reference to, for instance, the financial state of the country, did so in a rather simple way that did not require a specific knowledge of the field.

What is proposed in the rest of the thesis is a political analysis of this richness. That is, the focus will be on the satire that was meant to target power in one way or another.

For this purpose, not all the genres outlined above will be included. For instance, the cartoon series that existed as fictional stories as such and whose plot was not connected to the real circumstances of the country, not even at metaphorical level, will not be included. The same can be said for the written jokes and short announcements. Actually, written satire will be confined to a secondary role in general, to be mentioned only in relation to the visual discourse. This choice is driven by the decision to consider graphic satire as a genre in itself, as well as mirroring the very same policy of *Gırgır*'s editor – who made cartoons the core part of the magazine.

The analysis will follow thematic paths in which single caricatures, comic strips and regular columns of various kinds will be combined, rather than examined separately based on their format. In doing so, the way this satire was used to criticise specific aspects of the regime will be shown.

Colours

Gırgır was restricted to just three colours: yellow, black and white. Nowadays these colours are well placed in the satirical imaginary of the Turkish reader, as they have been used by a number of satirical magazines for several years, especially in the 1980s. However, it was *Gırgır* that first introduced them into the national satirical tradition, from its early days. To maintain this chromatic choice throughout the 1980s was a deliberate move, since the Turkish press had become multi-coloured by then. In this way, the yellow, black and white combination became a landmark of *Gırgır*, which paved the way for imitations from the later magazines that were conceived in its image.

The choice of these three colours was anything but obvious, if one considers the visual satirical traditions that existed at the time of *Gırgır*'s birth. On the one hand the satirical magazines that occupied the market like *Akbaba* were still published in black and white, with the only exception of the coloured cover page, and they looked more like newspapers than magazines. On the other hand, the cartoons of the 1950 generation were either in black and white or in full colour, but evidently no colour prevailed over the others. The same was true for the cartoons that were produced for the advertising market. But why yellow, black and white?

An interpretation that is sometimes put forward[12] calls upon *Gırgır*'s legacy with the Anglo-Saxon comic tradition. The hypothesis is that the magazine adopted these colours under the influence of *The Yellow Kid*, the late nineteenth-century US cartoon that is deemed to have been the world's first comic strip in the modern understanding of the term, that is to say with speech bubbles. This idea may be accepted only to a certain extent, since the implication that the colours were a mere imitation is certainly reductive; nonetheless, it provides a point of departure for a feasible explanation.

It is plausible that the yellow, black, and white colour scheme was a sort of conscious imitation of *The Yellow Kid* – visually declaring *Gırgır*'s sense of belonging to the American comic tradition, acknowledging its influence, and paying homage to it. However, this interpretation does not explain why *Gırgır* should have been willing to pay homage to *The Yellow Kid*, rather than to a contemporary comic strip like, for instance, those published in the satirical magazine *Mad*. After all, the latter had been a true source of inspiration for Aral at the time of conceiving *Gırgır* and it was certainly closer to it than *The Yellow Kid* in terms of style and content.

In addition, this hypothesis fails to recognise the prominently Turkish identity of *Gırgır* and the fact that the magazine did not simply imitate the Anglo-Saxon cartoons; conversely, it interpreted and adapted them to the Turkish imaginary. In fact, since its origins *Gırgır* had been "Turkifying" this tradition to such an extent that the reference to the American comics was not obvious at all for the reader – this is not to say that this legacy was denied, but it was certainly not flaunted as a distinguishing feature. Therefore, insisting on this hypothesis today would erroneously foster a static understanding of the magazine that would acknowledge a specific legacy of its birth but not all of its roots, and certainly not its evolution over time.

Another hypothesis points to a rather more practical explanation; that is, that due to the printing techniques that were available at that time, yellow was the colour that reacted most successfully to the printing machines.[13] Given that this colour appeared with fewer mistakes and smudges compared to the others, the choice of yellow would seem to be easily

[12] This hypothesis has been suggested by some experts on Turkish cartoons that I encountered during my research. In particular, this idea was initially suggested by Turkish media expert Aslı Tunç.

[13] This hypothesis is put forward by Seyit Ali Aral, son of *Gırgır*'s editor (in a private interview with the author, January 11 2012). The interviewee's knowledge of *Gırgır* in the period that is examined in this study is limited to his familiarity with *Gırgır*'s headquarters as the young son of the editor; nonetheless, he later became a professional cartoonist himself, and currently works for one of the most successful satirical magazines in Turkey. Therefore, even though the young Aral never worked for *Gırgır*, his knowledge of cartooning techniques is rooted in his professional experience in the field.

understandable. Nevertheless, this hypothesis is not exhaustive as it is valid only for the first years of *Gırgır*. In fact, in the early 1970s offset printing was still relatively new in Turkey and only a few print media had the privilege of taking shape through it; however, throughout the decade it became increasingly widespread and several papers came to be issued in full colour or, at least, began to make use of colours in some pages and columns. This suggests that *Gırgır*, too, could have followed this trend. Another factor in favour of the adoption of the full range of colours was the fact that *Gırgır* had been on the market for approximately a decade and thus, according to a general principle of Aral, it might have profited from a "restyling" after such a long time.[14]

So why did the magazine not renounce the three colours? And why exactly were these the ones it had chosen? A partial hint to the first question comes from Aral himself in the pages of the magazine, between the lines of a comment that supports the publication of a prison cartoon. Here, when advising that the prisoner-cartoonist avoid mixing up different colours, Aral explains that:

> "[W]ith the progress that is being made in the technology of printing techniques everybody has begun to use all nuances of colours and shades. The printing technique determines the cut, and the cut determines the illustration and its narrative. For example, had *Gırgır* been one of those magazines printed on glittering paper and in full colour we would have started to create the humour out of the colours, through the meaning and identity of colours or even through the contrast among them. And we would have become concerned with the final effect of the colours: we would have begun to be worried that a blue spot next to a yellow one would have mistakenly mixed into a green. Then we would have put a warm colour in the spot that we wished to be noticed first, and maybe we would have made the background blue."[15]

What emerges from these few lines is that the policy to let one single colour accompany the black and white combination was a deliberate choice that did not stem from any printing limitation. Quite the opposite, notwithstanding the opportunities that the evolution of printing techniques presented, the three colours policy derived from the precise

[14] Cihan Demirci (in a private interview with the author, December 21 2011) reports that Aral believed that magazines have a life span of approximately ten years, after which they become obsolete. According to this claim, it seems that Aral was aware of *Gırgır*'s risk of becoming old-fashioned, thus of the need for renovation.
[15] In the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page of the issue of January 30 1983.

willingness to keep the cartoonists as focused as possible on the narrative, thus on the message and meaning of their illustrations. In this respect, the fact that Aral never gave in to the lure of the full colour spectrum testifies to the authenticity of this concern, as well as to the coherence that the magazine showed in relation to it in time.

In addition, in the light of what has just emerged it is fair to claim that this choice lay in concerns that involved not only the process of realisation of the comics by the hand of the cartoonists, but also the reception of said comics on the part of the reader. In all probability, a cartoon completed with a wide range of colours would have looked essentially chaotic at first glance; in particular, the contrast between a simple line like those of *Gırgır*'s cartoons and a sophisticated choice of colours would have created a sense of disorientation in the reader, who would have needed a few seconds to address their attention toward the core message of the illustration.

Indeed, understanding the joke without hesitation is the *sine qua non* of the success of satire, and when the humour is not evident in the immediate reading the cartoonist fails to reach the reader. On the contrary, a cartoon made of a few colours manages to guide the readers to focus their attention and decode the meaning quickly. Therefore, even though Aral did not acknowledge this issue, neither in the comment that is quoted above nor elsewhere, it is realistic to imagine that the reluctance to adopt the full scale of colours derived also from the aim of reaching the widest audience through a simple visual language. After all, this desire guided the majority of the policies that were adopted in *Gırgır*, as has already been discussed.

Having ascertained that the three-colour policy cannot be attributed to the limitations of the printing techniques, the question regarding the reasons behind the choice of yellow remains unanswered. In this case, the explanation comes from some cartoonists who had worked side by side with Aral at *Gırgır*. According to Cihan Demirci,[16] Aral believed that the so-called cold colours, like blue, green and their nuances, did not fit the visual features that were inherent to *Gırgır*'s cartoons; conversely, he was convinced that comics should use warm colours like yellow, orange and red. Reportedly, this judgement was based on several experiments that Aral himself had carried out, coming to the conclusion that yellow was the most, if not the only, suitable option, as it did not overshadow the visual impact of the illustrations.[17]

[16] In a private interview with the author, February 28 2011.
[17] It is not clear whether Aral made these experiments for *Gırgır* or independently, possibly even before the birth of the magazine. If the latter is true, it could be claimed that he became convinced that yellow was the only

A posteriori, it might be said that the choice of colours, and even more the balance among colours, was of utmost importance for *Gırgır*, as this was the first satirical magazine almost entirely based on images. As already explained, the satirical magazines available before *Gırgır* appeared on the scene were published without colour; even the ones that presented a coloured cover inevitably recurred to black and white in the inner pages. Actually, it should be recalled that these magazines were mainly based on written satire, which could be expressed either by written satirical texts or by cartoons that were supported by short texts of various kinds (captions, dialogues) and that in general were placed outside the illustrated area. Those cartoons entrusted the satirical power to the written part, while the illustrations were a mere visual support that certainly enriched the satire but was not at its core.[18] By contrast, *Gırgır* relied on the satirical power of the illustrations alone. Accordingly, the introduction of a colour undoubtedly enriched its character and its visual impact, compared to the previous satirical magazines; it certainly stressed the fact that its satire was new and different. At the same time, the choice of yellow as a "light" colour was evidently in line with Aral's concern of privileging the narrative over the aesthetic details, as discussed in the previous section.

The explanation that is proposed by the cartoonists who worked with Aral is convincing, and the fact that it is based on the direct witness of these experts makes it acceptable overall. Still, with no intention of dismissing this explanation, a further consideration completes the picture.

If one imagines a newsagent or the magazines or newsstand in the corner of a shop, it is easy to envisage that the yellow colour allowed *Gırgır* to stand out among the wide range of print media. In the 1970s and early 1980s, that is to say both before and after the introduction of the offset printing technique and the adoption of full colours, the cover pages of newspapers and magazines were either in black and white (with the exception of newspapers' titles, which were displayed in colours, often red, at the top of the page) or in full colours. No other publication used yellow as its dominant colour: this was and remained a peculiarity of *Gırgır*. Therefore, it is likely that the yellow policy was also a "marketing strategy", to use a later expression: yellow was the colour with which the reader would always identify *Gırgır* and through which the potential buyer would immediately recognise the

possible colour not only for his magazine, but for comics in general. Certainly, his idea about yellow was already established as of 1971, as *Gırgır* was always published in yellow, black and white.

[18] This description does not account for the caricatures of the 1950 generation (that, conversely, were wordless, and thus relied entirely on their visual power) for the simple reason that these were not the object of specific satirical magazines. As explained in Chapter 2, these cartoons had a completely different look and aim: they carried no comic features, their purpose was to instruct rather than to entertain, and they asserted their presence in the pages of newspapers, political magazines, and in specific exhibitions, but not in satirical magazines.

magazine among all the others, even from afar. This would also explain why the magazine always resisted the adoption of full colour on the cover page.

To prove that the yellow, black and white combination was fixed in the collective memory of Turkey as *Gırgır*'s peculiarity until recent times, it will suffice to mention a satirical magazine of the 2010s. This is *Harakiri* (Hara-kiri), founded by a group of cartoonists who, for the most part, began their careers at *Gırgır*. The first issue of this magazine, which dates from May 1 2011, is full of implicit and explicit references to *Gırgır*. Its 44 pages present a variety of texts, caricatures, comic strips, and cartoon series in full colour, where the majority of images is realised in a style that mirrors the digital trends of the latest years: realistic, abstract, stylised, or geometric, they are certainly quite different from the cartoons of the *Gırgır* era. What is striking, though, is one of the five single cartoons that the reader sees as soon as they start to explore the magazine, on the third page, and which emerges as an exception compared to the other illustrations in several ways.

This cartoon (Fig. 4) displays a group of figures in the act of marching during a parade in an athletics field, while spectators watch from the stands. Both the marching and the observing men (women are absent from this comic) are realised in a style that immediately recalls that of *Gırgır*: regular physiognomic features point to the fact that the characters represent ordinary people, while only a few details avoid standardisation (for instance round glasses and a moustache to represent an adult, a snotty nose to mark out a shorter character as a child). The political satire that is made in this cartoon is also incredibly close to that of *Gırgır*. Let us see how.

The marching group in the foreground is led by a representative who holds a placard that acknowledges that they are the "unemployed of the textile sector"; behind them, another placard announces that the following group is that of the "young unemployed from the city of Sinop"; meanwhile, the presenter of the event has announced the arrival of the unemployed youth from the city of Mardin and is now introducing the Sinop group. The way in which the group in the foreground is moving, as in a military march,[19] suggests that they have been ordered to walk quickly, possibly because the groups that are taking part in the parade are so many that this is the only way that they can all parade together. A banner at a corner of the

[19] The military style of the march is conveyed through the swinging movements of the arms of the participants and the long, regular strides of their legs. The unison of their steps is suggested by the fact that all are in the act of taking a new step, with the left leg leading and the right one behind. The fact that the steps are wide is confirmed by the inclusion of a "RAP... RAP... RAP... RAP...", which stresses the pauses between steps (as opposed to a succession of quick steps, which might be rendered as "RAP RAP RAP RAP" or even "RAP! RAP! RAP! RAP!", suggesting a quick rhythm).

cartoon reveals that May 19 (a day traditionally celebrated as Atatürk Commemoration and Youth and Sports Day) has now become the Sports and Unemployment Day.

Clearly, the cartoon criticises the problem of unemployment in the country, and the rise of this phenomenon among the youth. The expressions on the faces of the marching unemployed – frightened, tired, nervous, angry – mirror the sentiments of Turkish society toward this issue and toward the lack of concern on the part of the government. The theme, criticism, and satirical tools of this cartoon are no doubt the same that were adopted in *Gırgır* in the early 1980s.

One could object that unemployment is a social, political and economic issue that can be occur in every political era, thus the reference to *Gırgır* could be only coincidental. But, a significant detail refutes this: the characters wear clothes – such as bell-bottomed trousers, slightly heeled shoes, horizontal striped sweaters and short tight jackets – that clearly evoke the 1970s, hence the *Gırgır* era.

And, ultimately, what makes this illustration an explicit homage to *Gırgır* are the colours: yellow, black and white. It is precisely thanks to these three colours that the reader is reminded of *Gırgır* at first glance and is unconsciously pushed to recognise the other similarities (theme, characters, style). Had it not been for the colours, this cartoon would have simply looked old-fashioned; instead, it is the combination of yellow, black and white that unavoidably positions it in the *Gırgır* tradition. What this 2011 caricature suggests is that even in today's rich satirical landscape, more that forty years after the first *Gırgır* and notwithstanding the imitations that crowded the marked with the same colours in the late 1980s, yellow, black and white remain the colours of *Gırgır*.

Going back to the 1980-1983 era, in the light of the political engagement of the magazine it is surprising that no politicisation of colours occurred under the military rule. Generally speaking, under dictatorships and repressive regimes the attribution of political connotations to details that are not political by nature, along with the use of symbols for political purposes, are commonly used devices to touch upon issues of political sensitivity. The politicisation of colours is a phenomenon that also emerged in 1980-1983 Turkey, especially with the approaching of the constitutional referendum of 1982. On this occasion the electorate was called to vote in favour of or against the adoption of a new constitution; the preference became a matter of colours insofar as the "yes" box was marked in red while the

negative counterpart was marked in blue.[20] However, *Gırgır* never recurred to this stratagem, neither by including additional colours nor by using the yellow, black and white in a political way.[21]

To sum up, the pages of *Gırgır* always adopted the yellow, black and white combination. This policy responded to aesthetic requirements, communication concerns, and marketing strategies. And the persistence of this combination made it the "trademark" of the magazine.

Themes: between social and political

As far as the content of *Gırgır*'s graphic satire is concerned, the magazine articulated its political engagement in a number of ways. The cartoons of the triennium touched upon a vast range of issues, which oscillated between social and political themes. In some cases, the distinction between these two spheres was fairly clear; however, for the most part, the definition of a cartoon as belonging to the social or the political realm was blurred. This, I argue, was a specific strategy aimed at carrying out political denunciations on certain topics in ways that made *Gırgır*'s concern clear, while also strategically veiling its criticism.

Overtly political satire was achieved through caricatures of political figures, visual narrations of the policies of the government, representations of their consequences on the population, and parodies of the state ideology. The first two trends will be discussed extensively in the rest of the thesis, above all in chapters 4 and 5. Concerning the latter two trends, a few examples may help us to understand how criticism was made.

An illustration published on January 16 1983 pictures a man reproaching a street beggar for relying on charity instead of getting a job (Fig. 5). Despite his obvious rudeness, what characterises the angry man is a fair degree of inconsistency; in fact, as he shouts at the

[20] On the eve of the referendum, cartoons began to "play" with red and blue; accordingly, the risk of sanctions and bans due to these colours became a possibility. This is what happened, for instance, to a *Cumhuriyet* illustration by Behiç Ak, who drew a couple in the act of discussing how to paint the walls of their new house and ultimately expressing a preference for blue.

[21] To clarify, it is worth mentioning that red and orange made an appearance once in the magazine during the period of military rule, in the issue of October 2 1983. According to the cartoonists interviewed by the author, the presence of these additional colours was not intentional and, in all probability, was the result of a printing error – which was not so uncommon with the printing techniques that were available at the time. The fact that, besides filling some illustrations in a precise way, these colours also appear as random spots on some other pages seems to confirm this explanation.

beggar, he is also queueing in a long line outside an employment agency, which reveals that he is also jobless. The absurd scene pokes fun at the fact that unemployment has reached such a high rate that hopelessness, tension and despair have overcome solidarity and turned people against each other.

The consequences of bad decision-making also inspired what we may refer to as "school and university cartoons", that is to say illustrations about student life that proliferated at the opening of the academic year that followed a massive reformation of the educational system in 1981.[22] These cartoons express the inconveniences of the new system through the experience of fictional students; in so doing, they engage in a critique of the education policies promoted by the regime.

With regard to state ideology, kemalism experienced a revival under the regime. As Bozarslan expertly explains throughout his *Histoire de la Turquie contemporaine*, the founding ideology of the republic was characterised by different and in some cases contradictory principles that, in time, paved the way for its appropriation by political leaders and movements of very disparate views.[23] The 1980 junta inserted itself in this tradition, interpreting and promoting kemalism in its own way.

First of all, kemalism became the source of self-legitimation of the regime. In fact, from the very first message pronounced by Evren and broadcasted to the nation on the day of the coup, the military claimed to have seized power to safeguard the republic that "the Great Atatürk entrusted to [them]" and that, according to them, was weakened by ideologies other than kemalism.[24] Second, kemalism became a guiding light of their rule. It was promoted as a doctrine that could be appealing for everyone, as a common ideological ground where the left and the right would converge, and hence put an end to their fights. In the promotion of this ideology, the military exploited the centenary of Atatürk's birth (1881-1981): 1981 was declared Atatürk's year, and the celebrations started on January 5 and went on until the year's end.

Such strong emphasis paved the way for many to falsely declare their adherence to kemalism in order to get into the regime's good books. The most significant example is perhaps the one of Türkeş, who declared "I am not fascist, I am kemalist" during the trial against his party on November 17 1981.[25] *Gırgır* did not fail to notice this trend; thus,

[22] The higher education reforms will be treated in detail in the following chapter, in relation to the caricatures of İhsan Doğramacı – chairman of the new the Council of Higher Education.
[23] Hamit Bozarslan, *Histoire de la Turquie contemporaine* (Paris, 2004).
[24] Kültürel Yapılanma Grubu, *Yorumsuz. 12 Eylül Belgeleri*, 13 www.cfg.org.au (accessed 15/04/2012).
[25] Cf. Various Artists, *Cumhuriyet Ansiklopedisi 1923-2000* (Istanbul, 2002), Vol. 4, 38.

Atatürk's year also became the year of "kemalist cartoons". These illustrations denounced businessmen and building contractors for displaying a questionable respect for Atatürk that is always refuted by the situations in which these characters are portrayed; at the same time, that respect ends up giving them access to special and equally questionable favouritism.

Strictly social satire, then, was achieved through scenes that shed light on odd or problematic trends in society, or within specific sections of it. Some recurring issues were, for example, the gap between urban and rural culture, gender relations, and the addiction to television. This social satire presented a high degree of continuity with the one that had become a major feature of *Gırgır* in the mid-1970s and, as a matter of fact, it did not imply a specific attack on the government.

Besides merely social and political satire, *Gırgır* published a high number of cartoons that were somewhere in between. The range of topics dealt with in these illustrations is incredibly rich, and the ways in which they are treated places them at various different points on the social-political axis. Despite all nuances, this satire may be labelled under two major umbrellas.

One consists of the treatment of matters that were apparently social but that, actually, concealed strong political stands. Included in this category there are a number of scenes that revolve around ordinary practices of daily life, among which the consumption of *çay* (tea). In a caricature of January 4 1981 (Fig. 6) tea drinkers escape the country in order to evade their debts with their trusted *çaycı* (tea man). On the same line, in the issue of January 18 1981, a debate on whether tea consumption is harmful to the nervous system leads to a positive answer, but not for the effects of caffeine, rather because of the unpleasant moment of paying off the debt to a *çaycı* at the end of the month. Similarly, on another occasion a local *çaycı* is annoyed at the request of a regular customer to note down the tea that he just had, instead of paying the bill, which is growing daily.

At first glance, these cartoons simply mock a routine moment and a traditional habit, namely drinking tea at the local tea room and noting down the bills of trustworthy customers to let them pay the total at the end of the month, respectively. However, such scenes conceal a deeper denunciation, which unequivocally attacks the economic policies. For, ultimately, it suggests that the latter have led the country into such a deep financial crisis that people have become unable to afford even such small pleasures as a glass of tea.

Political denunciations of this kind emerge from the most unpredictable illustrations. While in the "*çay* cartoons" the explicit reference to money is a good hint at the ultimate target, the financial situation, in other cases the connection between the social practice and criticism of the government is much less obvious.

Let us consider the "sports cartoons", of which we found abundant examples in *Gırgır*. These illustrations targeted players, coaches, clubs, and fans, respectively for their scores, bad performances, bad policies and unquestioned faith in a team; in brief, the humour revolved around the vicissitudes of that world. Nonetheless, these scenes could also hide political messages, concealed in players' or fans' comments, but also in slogans and banners.

A political stand could also be expressed by alluding to crucial facts of the sports world that had manifest political connotations, like the controversy that surrounded the Ertuğrulgazi Youth and Sports Club. This minor club, based in the popular Mesken district of Bursa, had a football team known for its sympathy for the Soviet team Dynamo Kiev, which had earned it the nickname Dinamo Mesken. Because of this name, in the aftermath of the coup the team was closed down, judged by the regime as "an open offence to the national values";[26] furthermore, some of its managers and players were arrested, tortured and sentenced to various punishments.[27] Thus, sports cartoons could either be a pretext to express political stands on facts that did not necessarily belong to the realm of sports, or mirror the political connotation that in some cases the sports sphere had gained for real.

The other umbrella under which satire along the social-political scale may be grouped is that of social issues that became political in the particular circumstances of the regime, that is to say as a consequence of certain policies and decisions of the military government that affected issues which normally belonged to the social sphere. The politicisation of the social became a way to ridicule and condemn these policies, stress the responsibility of the government, and react against them.

For instance, in the summer of 1981 *Gırgır* published cartoons of, among others, a young man suggesting to a male friend that he change sex in order to wear his tight jeans more comfortably; men puzzled at the presence of tall masculine women in men's public toilets; and men walking in the streets surrounded by female breasts emerging from the walls of surrounding buildings. These illustrations should not be understood as sexist or

[26] Anonymous, "Generallerin kapattığı futbol kulübü. Dinamo Mesken'in öyküsü," *Atlas Tarih*, No. 32, (February-March 2015): pp. 20-21, 21.
[27] For a short history of the club see Anonymous, "Generallerin kapattığı futbol kulübü. Dinamo Mesken'in öyküsü," *Atlas Tarih*, No. 32, (February-March 2015): pp. 20-21.

homophobic attempts to mock nakedness, the body and "the unusual"; instead they are *Gırgır*'s response to the persecution which homosexuals became victim to in that period.

The episode that overtly and officially initiated this persecution was the decision of the Istanbul Police to forbid singer Bülent Ersoy from performing on June 11 of that year. This restriction came at a time when the famous and highly acclaimed artist, born a male, was resuming her career after the sex reassignment surgery she had undergone in London two months earlier. The surgery made Ersoy's homosexuality, already quite prominent, overtly explicit – thus her return to stage presented an unacceptable challenge to the military, who were struggling to impose traditional socio-moral values. Unsurprisingly, the ban on Ersoy's public performances was immediately followed, the next day, by a more extensive prohibition against all homosexual, transsexual and transgender singers appearing on stage. Therefore, it may be argued that the proliferation of homosexual, transsexual and transgender cartoons in that period became an attempt to protect and stand up for Ersoy's presence in the public sphere, as well as to assert and normalise the existence of homosexual, transsexual and transgender people in general.

In a similar fashion, *Gırgır* reacted to the increasing problem of drugs that marked the end of 1982. In December that year, drug related issues became commonplace in the press. The main issues were illegal drug production at the outskirts of the big cities, drug trafficking, the rise in drug use, and the effects of this phenomenon on the youth. To mention one example, on December 23 the daily *Milliye*t (Nationality) led with an article that stresses the extent that drug problems had reached throughout the year. The piece discusses the struggle of the state by reporting statistics from police operations, as well as declarations from the authorities at the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance.[28] The article continued on the inner pages (p. 9) by commenting on a dramatic picture from a section of the mental hospital of Bakırköy (Istanbul) that is crowded by victims of drug addiction. Later on in the same page, the news follows the case of a drug dealer recently released on bail.[29] The many aspects of the problem that are dealt with in one day by a single paper indicate the alarming levels that the issue had reached.

Gırgır dealt with the drugs issue in its own way. For example, on January 2 1983 it dedicated a column to a fictional professor who is supposed to be an expert in the field. The man acquaints the readers with the effects of drugs by describing them one by one, with the

[28] *Milliyet*, December 23 1982, p. 1.
[29] *Milliyet*, December 23 1982, p. 9.

goal of discouraging their use; nonetheless, the descriptions are amusing to the extent that at some point they seem to have the opposite effect, that is, to encourage people to try them.

Of particular interest for our discussion is a cartoon included in the issue of January 23 1983 (Fig. 7). Here a drug smuggler is trying to sell his illegal wares by loudly advertising them in a crowded spot in broad daylight, as if he were a street seller of fruit and vegetables. Evidently, by emphasising the seller's brazen insolence, the sketch draws attention to the ease with which drugs were circulating at the time.

Certainly, in different conditions the reader should understand this scene as criticising the inability of the state to stem this phenomenon, implying that the strategies against drug smuggling are not efficient enough. However, in the particular circumstances of the regime, when soldiers garrisoned public spaces and social control was practiced with all possible means, the criticism seems rather directed to the lack of concern of the state over this matter. In other words, the cartoon implies that the regime is intentionally not dealing with this matter, at least not to the extent that it could.

A further critique might not have escaped the readers of the time, namely one regarding the unequal treatment that the military government had in store for different citizens. I refer to the fact that, on the one hand, students and workers could be arrested on the streets for suspect political activity or for breaking curfew; but, on the other, that in the same streets illegal drugs-related activities could be carried out undisturbed. Though not expressed in visual terms in this particular illustration, this comparison is encouraged by the high presence of cartoons that denounce the phenomenon of mass imprisonment on the same pages.[30]

Ultimately, the illustration seems to grasp a truth that became clearer with time; that is, drugs were tolerated by the military as part of their depoliticisation goal. After September 12, while unions and associations were shut down, discos and night clubs experienced a boom. Night life offered fun, but also threats, and articles in the press like the one mentioned above suggest that the latter came to reach alarming proportions and the state was aware of it. However, the regime did not intervene, despite the evident contradiction of these trends with the conservative values that it was trying to reassert. The new forms of entertainment – along with drugs, which were an aspect of it – came to be accepted with the belief that they would replace politics in the life of the youth.

[30] The cartoons that denounce mass imprisonment are discussed extensively in Chapter 5.

These examples, and the trends that they represent, show that *Gırgır* intentionally played with the boundaries between the social and political, making it difficult to label the cartoons as distinctly belonging to one sphere or the other, and, most importantly, making the criticism (and hence the challenge) of power more difficult to realise and punish on the part of the military. The value of this satire should not be underestimated: we have seen that even the cartoons that did not appear political at first glance could ultimately contribute to spread information, expose problems, and raise concerns – at a time when public debates were forbidden, this contribution was of the utmost importance.

Missing topics

It is no exaggeration to assert that *Gırgır*'s satire treated almost any theme that came to light in daily life or in the domestic affairs of the country during the regime, either regularly or sporadically. In addition to the issues that emerged as examples in the previous sections, other recurring topics along the social-political satirical line included (but were not limited to) corruption and the mafia, the building of useless infrastructures, criminality, the high cost of living, pollution, crumbling buildings, power cuts, train and plane accidents, workers' rights, depression and mental diseases. In this wide range of themes, three in particular are striking for their sporadic presence, namely: foreign policy, international affairs, and religion.

With respect to the first two, let us recall that one of the goals that underlined the birth of *Gırgır* and its general line was the promotion of a popular (as opposed to high) satire that drew inspiration from the world of common people, and that was addressed to them. Foreign and international politics could contribute only marginally to this goal, as they were not embedded in ordinary life: since they did not involve readers first hand, they would hardly inspire the same involvement as the issues listed above. Thus, it may be concluded that their limited presence was merely due to their minor importance in *Gırgır*'s line.

The absence of religion turns out to be more puzzling, because, as a matter of fact, Sunni Islam experienced a revival with the regime. The authors of the coup adopted the Turkish-Islamic synthesis elaborated by İbrahim Kafesoğlu, the leading ideologue of the right wing intellectuals called *Aydınlar Ocağı* (The Hearth of the Enlightened). According to the synthesis, Islam had a special attraction to the Turks due to similarities between pre-Islamic Turkish society and Islamic civilization; consequently, the Turks were to be "the soldiers of

Islam". As the political scientist Jean-François Bayart put it, the synthesis was the conservative response to Marxism and to a humanist historiography that counterbalanced kemalist historiography by asserting the importance of civilizations other than the Turkish one in the Anatolian past.[31] Indeed, it was a timely solution for a regime that sought legitimation in kemalism and showed zero tolerance for the left.

The military promoted the synthesis as a unifying element of society, in the attempt to deny socio-cultural diversity in the name of nationalist unity. As a consequence, religion was reintroduced to the public sphere. Hence, for example, it came to be addressed by Evren in his public speeches and it was included in school programmes.

In the light of this revival, its absence from the cartoons of the 1980-1983 period is astonishing. Nevertheless, we should clarify that the reintroduction of Islam to the public sphere did not imply the imposition of a heavy religious climate; quite the contrary, despite having penetrated politics, religion still retained a rather intimate dimension. In brief, political Islam was not a concern yet. In addition, we should make clear that, generally speaking, *Gırgır* had never satirised religion(s) in terms of personal beliefs. We may derive that the cartoonists did not perceive religion as a political threat in this initial phase; thus, they were not interested in satirising it.

One thing that the magazine did, however, was to mock conservatism. This trend, which started in the years prior to the coup, continued also afterwards in the form of caricatures that ridiculed the opinions, arrogance, and habits of stubborn conservatives.

The episode of censorship

The overview of *Gırgır*'s social and political satire that was proposed above has begun to show what will become clearer throughout the analysis that develops in the three following chapters, that is that the magazine was walking on thin ice. Its criticism, denunciations, and spread of information through satire was pushing the limits of the regime's tolerance further every week and, to some extent predictably, it did not take long for the consequences of this audacity to be felt. In the summer of 1981, the magazine was subject to censorship and temporarily banned.

[31] Jean-François Bayart, *L'Islam Républicain. Ankara, Téhéran, Dakar* (Paris, 2010), pp. 172-173.

The cartoon that the regime would not tolerate was a full page caricature that appeared on the front cover of the issue of July 19 1981 (Fig. 8). Its target was Müşerref Tezcan, a singer who became extremely popular at that time with the deeply nationalist song *Türkiyem* (My Turkey), which the regime regularly played on the state radio and television, to the extent that nowadays it is remembered as the national anthem of that era. The scene represents the singer in the act of singing *Türkiyem* in a television studio; meanwhile, a flag seller approaches the cameraman and states, very seriously: "No excuses!.. You'll broadcast me on television too! I sell [Turkish] flags too...". This alluded to Tezcan's dress, which resembles the Turkish flag. As a matter of fact, this outfit was not dissimilar to the one that the singer actually wore in the official video of *Türkiyem* – which was red, with the white star and crescent. Thus, the caricature stood as a two-fold provocation: first, it ridiculed the song that embodied the nationalist spirit of the military era more than any other, and second, it laughed at the national flag.

Cartoonist Ergün Gündüz, who drew this caricature (based on an idea of his colleague Hasan Kaçan), explains that the regime put it on trial for "insulting the Turkish flag by drawing it on the body of an old, ugly and inauspicious woman".[32] In addition, *Gırgır* was forced to close for four weeks. Meanwhile, the singer reportedly made a phone call to the magazine, wishing that the hands of whoever drew that cartoon would break; this, Gündüz assures ironically, did not happen.[33]

Concerning the trial, let us explain that a policy of the magazine during the regime was to publish young cartoonists' most sensitive images without signature, in order to protect them from possible persecution; as a result, responsibility fell on the editor. In this case too, Gündüz, who was 21 years old at that time, was kept away from the whole affair and the trial was opened against Aral. Despite an initial request of imprisonment, the sentence was converted to a pecuniary fine.[34]

Regarding the ban, then, we should not be misled by the idea that a four week closure was a light sentence according to the standards of the regime. Rather, this verdict should be evaluated in relation to the founding policies of *Gırgır*. In fact, the magazine traditionally refused sponsors and advertisements, financing itself entirely through its sales. This meant that the risk of not appearing on the market inevitably meant risk of heavy financial losses. Consequently, a break of four weeks was only relatively light, because the financial damage

[32] In Various Authors, "Kılıç Hep Kalemi Kesti. 1860'lardan 1980'lere iktidar-basın ilişkileri," *NTV Tarih*, No. 15, (April 2010): pp. 32-42, 40.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Seyit Ali Aral, in a private interview with the author (January 11 2012).

caused by the interruption of sales was substantial. In the end, this ban was an apparently clement yet exemplary punishment.

Ironically, but also not surprisingly, the persecution of *Gırgır* turned out to be a double-edged sword for the regime, as, ultimately, it earned the magazine an unprecedented popularity. In fact, its return to the market on August 23 1981 marked the beginning of a fast growing sales record: from the already remarkable average of 400,000 copies of the previous month, to almost 500,000 afterwards.[35] These rates elevated *Gırgır* to the best-selling weekly magazine in the country and placed it among the most popular satirical magazines in the world, indeed it was allegedly superseded only by the Soviet *Crocodile* and the American *Mad*.

A few words about the rise in sales are necessary here. The success of works that are at the centre of controversies is certainly a common trend: that controversy sparks attention and attention fuels curiosity is a general axiom, valid also in more recent times and not only in Turkey. That said, in this case it seems reductive to attribute such an astonishing rise only to new readers whom the "*Gırgır* affair" might have attracted to the magazine out of curiosity. Rather, it may be the case that a number of readers who used to buy *Gırgır* collectively and circulate it in their circles (of relatives, schoolmates, colleagues, friends, etc.) began to buy their own copies in order to contribute to the financial recovery of the magazine. Without denying the importance attributed to curiosity, this explanation completes the picture, suggesting that the loyal readers showed exemplary solidarity to the magazine in response to the regime's attempt to reshape the tones of its satire.

After July 1981, *Gırgır* was no longer under the grip of censorship; however, this is not to say that it had turned to softer satire. Conversely, the magazine resumed the same political and social line as before. And not only: on September 25 1983, Müşerref Tezcan and her song became the subject of a new caricature (Fig. 9). This time the singer was portrayed selling cassettes of her famous song in the streets; a caption explained that the occasion was a decision by the ministry of education to broadcast *Türkiyem* in primary schools in order to strengthen patriotism. Once again, the point was the nationalist message of the song and its ties to the regime.

This and the other cartoons of August 1981 onwards prove that the *Gırgır* team was not daunted by the ban; on the contrary, censorship had not scared them.

[35] More precisely, after the episode of censorship *Gırgır* had a print run of 500,000 copies, of which up to 489,000 were sold in 1982. Cihan Demirci, in a private interview with the author (December 21 2011).

General considerations on Gırgır *and censorship*

The ban of July 1981 proves that *Gırgır* did not go unnoticed by the regime. At the same time, on the one hand, the episode of censorship did not mark a change in the satirical line, and, on the other, the magazine was not silenced a second time. These facts underline a contradiction that leads one to question how it was possible that the military tolerated the existence of *Gırgır* throughout their rule, except for that one exception.

A first recurring answer ascribes the "tolerance" of the military to the success of the magazine; accordingly, the high sales and popularity of *Gırgır* might have prevented the regime from persecuting it more harshly for fear of losing support. A second appealing explanation suggests that by portraying, ridiculing and opposing the regime, the satirical sketches were simultaneously paving the way for its normalisation. In other words, whereas the political commitment of the magazine was oriented toward criticising military power and standing up against it, it also allowed expressions of deradicalised discontent that the regime may well have appreciated for their "safety valve function", which might have ultimately contributed to the acceptance of the military in the political sphere. Though potentially true, these two interpretations are far from exhaustive, as they do not explain the contrast between the *Gırgır* case and the strict censorship that was applied to other acclaimed artistic expressions that could have easily had a similar normalising function.

A most likely explanation is that the regime did not fully understand the meaning of this satire. Conceivably, according to the military *Gırgır* was an entertainment magazine that could happen to cross the line from time to time, as it did with the caricature of Müşerref Tezcan, but that, generally speaking, was just a harmless comic paper. Underestimating the critical potential of its satire from the outset presumably encouraged the local military commanders and prosecutors in charge of press scanning to gloss over it.

This is not to say that *Gırgır* was not controlled at all; rather, it was not thoroughly scrutinised. Supposedly the cover cartoons attracted the highest attention, along with illustrations with clear visual impact and humour that was easy to grasp. Other than that, it is hard to believe that all the satirical contributions were read and understood. For, had this been the case, the majority would have certainly faced consequences due to their highly political message, which pointed directly at the regime, as the introduction of social and political satire has begun to show, and as will emerge more clearly in the following chapters. The fact that the military were not aware of the critical potential of *Gırgır* also explains why in July 1981 they allowed its return to the market after four weeks, instead of imposing a longer closure.

Generally speaking, there is little doubt that, had the regime fully understood the power of *Gırgır*'s satire, the magazine would have been banned more often or for longer, as was happening to other print media in those years. The explanation for *Gırgır*'s survival suggests that the regime, while afraid of what was explicitly political and intellectual, did not necessarily appreciate the impact of cultural manifestations that expressed political messages in more subtle ways. The following three chapters will delve into a discussion of these subtle ways with regard to the most challenging cartoons that *Gırgır* published during the triennium.

CHAPTER 4

SATIRICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ARMY AS RULERS

The 1980 turn of events inevitably affected *Gırgır*'s representations of politicians. Before the rise to power of the military, the political satire of the magazine had largely taken inspiration from political parties, their values and positions, and even more so from the real actors of the different political factions, both politicians and their supporters. With the closure of all political parties, this lively political scene disappeared all of a sudden; for, not only were political parties immediately shut down, but their leaders were also arrested and taken into custody, as discussed in the first chapter. These measures, together with the ongoing weakening of the opportunities and tones of public debates, which were ultimately forbidden in June 1981, deprived satire of an enormous source of material.

The last caricatures of party leaders

Initially, politicians remained on the scene despite the abolition of their institutional role. Their presence in the news was linked primarily to the temporary detention of party leaders and the Türkeş affair.[1] Accordingly, *Gırgır* was initially able to exploit these facts for satirical purposes.

Surprising as it might seem, the issue of the magazine that was published immediately after the military coup does not mention the coup at all. Actually, given that this issue came out on September 14, it is very likely that the magazine's layout and content were established the day before the coup, hence the introduction of an alternative cover would have caused delays to printing and distribution. By contrast, in the issue of September 21 the satirical reaction to the turn of events is quite evident.

An anonymous caricature is dedicated to the destiny of politicians after their dismissal and detention, specifically Süleyman Demirel and Bülent Ecevit. As the caption reveals, the two party leaders find themselves held in custody at a holiday resort in the province of

[1] Unlike the other party leaders, on September 12 Türkeş fled in order to avoid arrest. He surrendered himself two days later.

Gallipolis, and they are portrayed as "enjoying their time" in a swimming pool under the supervision of a military officer (Fig. 10). Next to it, a cartoon by Ismet and Ergün[2] acknowledges that parliamentarians have started looking for new jobs, and shows some of them working as waiters in a restaurant (Fig. 11).

What is particularly interesting in both illustrations is the double meaning that unveils the wolves in sheep's clothing in a way that is rarely found elsewhere. That is to say, generally speaking the mechanism of satire is based on a shift from a superficial reading, where the judgement on political actors is apparently neutral, to a hidden meaning where the characters are held as responsible and guilty for a given situation. Instead, in these two illustrations the representation of the political figures even seems positive in the first reading, while it becomes traditionally negative at deeper understanding. Thus, the gap between the two readings is wider and, consequently, the criticism stronger. Let us explore how this mechanism works in each of the two caricatures.

In the first one, Demirel and Ecevit are represented together in a swimming pool. The former is not enjoying the fact that the latter is splashing some water at him and he complains to the soldier: "Lieutenant, look, he is splashing water at me!" A first reading of this image suggests that the two party leaders have become extremely vulnerable. In particular, the fact that they look defenceless and awkward like two children seems to prompt the reader to sympathise with them and, correspondingly, to condemn the military regime that, essentially, forced them to renounce their dignity by depriving them of their political authority and civil liberty. In addition, the young age and full military uniform of the lieutenant creates a contrast with the age and state of undress of the two politicians (who are only in swimming trunks), which is certainly contributing to this impression.

However, a completely different meaning emerges when reading this caricature in the light of the political history of the years that preceded the coup. Demirel and Ecevit had been ruling the country since 1973 in an alternation of unstable and short-lasting governments that had repeatedly come to power either alone or in coalition with third parties. Although different in political orientation, interests and priorities, the performances of those years had proved that both leaders were essentially incapable of acting in the interest of the country, either as prime ministers or while in opposition. To use the language of the caricature, they had behaved like two restless children who were not able to share the same space (the political arena – represented by the swimming pool) in a peaceful way and who ultimately

[2] The creators of the examined cartoons will be indicated whenever possible throughout the analysis. Where no name is given, it should be assumed that the cartoon appeared in the magazine anonymously.

provoked the intervention of the military (which is as firm and determined as the expression on the face of the young lieutenant) to put an end to their disputes.

The same process of binary satire characterises the second cartoon. Here the former parliamentarians are portrayed as clumsy waiters and, at first glance, the reader is moved to pity them for being suddenly forced to renounce their positions and work in the service industry. But, actually, a closer reading reverses this interpretation. The expression of anger with which all the waiters look at each other reveals that they are not simply unable, but truly unwilling to fulfil the task of serving food professionally; it also reveals that they are fighting and throwing food at each other. To put it simply, they are deliberately creating chaos. In addition, an irritated chef observes the whole scene from a corner, commenting "Oh dear, how clumsy they are!.. We employed them as waiters... they've ruined the restaurant *too*..".[3] Here, the word "too" should be understood as hinting at their experience in parliament.[4] Ultimately, the whole scene suggests that the former politicians are unwilling to take charge of their own responsibilities, attain professional standards, and cooperate, no matter where they work: this is as true with their new jobs in the restaurant as it was when they were in parliament.

In both caricatures satire is shaped by the passage from an apparently sympathetic initial humour to more fierce criticism. The contrast between the two sensations that are provoked in the reader in the two examples unmistakably sharpens the critical function of the illustrations, as the reversal of judgement has a surprise effect that hard hits the targeted subjects. However, this is not to say that *Gırgır* justified the military intervention or supported the rise to power of the armed forces in opposition to the political class, as nothing suggests that here, nor anywhere else in the magazine. Conversely, the two cartoons express disappointment, anger, and delusion toward a political class that ruined the country by neglecting their own basic duties. In this respect, the two caricatures stand on the side of civil society.

With regard to their publication within the *Gırgır* collection, the possible reasons why these cartoons did not appear in the previous issue were mentioned above, namely printing

[3] Italics not present in the original.

[4] In general, the Turkish word *da* carries a certain ambiguity due to the fact that it might mean either "too" or "and", and the difference between the two often becomes blurred in the colloquial language. Doubts as to its translation could arise in this cartoon, too, as the suspension points and the typically oral expression *be* (an exclamation that roughly corresponds to "oh dear") suggest that the chef is using an informal language. Accordingly, the alternative translation to the one proposed in the main text would be "We employed them as waiters... *and* they ruined the restaurant…". However, the suspension points as well as the position of *da* in the sentence point to the other version as being the right one, because, for *da* to mean "and" in a colloquial sentence like this, it would have been better in a different position, that is: *Ne beceriksiz adamlar be!.. garson diye aldık...* da *dükkanı batırdılar!* (instead, the chef says *Ne beceriksiz adamlar be!.. garson diye aldık... dükkanı* da *batırdılar!..*).

and distribution timing. That said, their specific appearance on September 21 gains particular relevance in relation to the following line of the magazine. In fact, except for a few cases, from September 28 onwards politicians disappeared from *Gırgır* sooner than they did from the media.[5]

In the light of this trend, it may be claimed that it is no coincidence that these cartoons appeared on September 21, rather than in a later issue. Likewise, it may be claimed that it is not the case that these examples were chosen as the last representation of the political class in the magazine. After all, given their content and meaning, these two scenes could have easily appeared also one or two weeks later and, given the fact that politicians were debated in the media for some time after September 21, later news could have inspired new cartoons about them.[6] By contrast, the *Gırgır* staff chose these illustrations to clarify their position regarding the military coup once and for all: they blamed the political class as a whole, deeming them responsible for the political crisis and for the consequences that the rise of the military to power would have for the country. It was a strong criticism that carried no ambiguity.

Civilian rulers make way for the military

In the same way as the two cartoons discussed above represent the opinion of *Gırgır* in relation to the political class that had been disposed by the coup, another illustration in the September 21 issue clarifies its position vis-à-vis the newly established one. The image portrays a man in civilian clothes and another wearing a military uniform in conversation in an office (Fig. 12). As the caption clarifies, the former is Aytekin Kotil, mayor of Istanbul since 1977, and the latter is General İsmet Hakkı Akansel, the military figure who took his place in the aftermath of the coup. Kotil, who is providing some information and advice to the in-coming mayor, is immortalised while saying:

[5] The only relevant exception is Turgut Özal, who remained in the foreground of politics, thus also of the magazine. As for the others, they ceased to constitute a relevant part of *Gırgır*'s satire notwithstanding the fact that, occasionally, they still made the media speak of them, be it for a declaration, a decision, or simply a health problem. Politicians progressively re-entered the political cartoons of *Gırgır* with the approach of the 1983 elections.

[6] As a matter of fact the MHP appeared in *Gırgır* for a while, especially in relation to the coming to light of its international ties and cells abroad, its implication in the illegal smuggling of weapons, and involvement in terror activities that almost protected terrorist groups of the far right. Nonetheless, no specific MHP figure is portrayed in these cartoons.

"Let me tell [you] my dear sir... at the beginning of every month, employees and civil servants want their salary... you know the municipality's coffers are empty and dry... tell them 'I will give you your salary in 15 days'. Fifteen days later they come again... this time say 'I am waiting for the money from Ankara. Be patient for one or two more days.' You check, the money doesn't come... say 'I will sell the Galata Bridge. So your pay is guaranteed.' You earn one more month. I used to manage things this way. But I don't know what you [plan to] do..."[7]

The first issue that emerges from this exchange is that the municipality is bankrupt, thus it cannot guarantee its employees the basic right to receive the salary to which they are entitled. A second problem is the inefficiency of the outgoing mayor and his lack of concern for the distress that his subordinates were forced to endure. Significantly, not only does he prove that he has not met expectations, but he also admits that he was knowingly governing the city badly.

Actually, a huge corpus of *Gırgır* cartoons discussed the financial crisis of that era, and the same is true for the performance of politicians of various ranks. In this respect, this cartoon is not exceptional and may be compared to many others. Yet, it has a further aspect that gives it a singular meaning.

The reader is faced with an outgoing mayor who is essentially teaching his replacement how to cheat the citizens in an apparently polite way. Besides what he says (admitting bad governance and encouraging his successor to follow the same path), the tone is also striking from the very first words that come out from Kotil's mouth, namely "let me tell [you] my dear sir". The way the mayor addresses the general bypasses not only the linguistic conventions that any institutional meeting would demand, but also those that the military rank of the general would require. In fact, the word *efendi*, "sir", is the most general expression that can be used to address an interlocutor, male and female alike. Here, the most literal translation of the Turkish original *efendime söyliyim* is the wish form "I want to tell [you] my sir", where the presence of the possessive word "my" (the affix *–m–* in *efendime*) conveys the informal, even friendly attitude of the speaker (hence the decision to add the word "dear" in the translation). It is true that the scene seems to be set in an office, in all

[7] The colloquial tone of the quotation mirrors the Turkish original.

probability the mayor's office, and the absence of any other people suggests that it is not taking place during an official occasion of any kind; still, the degree of spontaneity exceeds all expectations.

A further confirmation of the unduly informal tone of the conversation is the cartoonist's deliberate misspelling of some words, written in a version that unmistakably denotes a colloquial style that would never be tolerated in an official context, nor in the written language. For instance, the correct spelling of *söyleyeyim* (let me tell [you]) is abandoned in favour of *söyliyim*, and *satacağım* (I will sell) appears in the spoken version *satıcam*.

Contrary to expectation, the confidence and complicity shown by Kotil is reciprocated by Akansel. Notwithstanding the former's reproachful speech and the casual tone, the general appears extremely relaxed and welcomes the advice gratefully, even with a smile. In this way, the reader is introduced to a twofold aspect of the changing political landscape. On the one hand, a former mayor seems to have no problem accepting the fact that Akansel is literally stealing his position, in other words his power. And, by extension, he seems keen on passively accepting the new political order in general. In this respect, this cartoon denounces the old guard for its careless attitude in the same manner as the cartoon about Demirel and Ecevit. On the other hand, the future mayor is likely to perform as badly as his predecessor, supposedly because he had already decided to do so.[8]

The confidence and complicity between the two is a crucial feature in the scene. Besides showing an aspect of the financial difficulties of the state and the inefficiency of the former mayor, this caricature highlights the complicity and continuity between the old and the new guard. Such complicity suggests that there will be no change for the better, certainly not in the micro-level administration (of the city of Istanbul, in this case) and presumably not even at macro-level in the ruling of the whole country. For this pessimistic tone, this cartoon should be recognised as being one of the first predictions of what the military rule would actually entail. In other words, only a few days after September 12 the cartoonists of *Gırgır* were proving courageous enough to express their dissent and scepticism toward the regime.

[8] Actually, in the cartoon there is no hint of the general's intention to become a bad mayor before his meeting with Kotil, so it would be theoretically right to hypothesise that if he adopts the wrong attitude and decisions this will be because of the bad advice that he was given by Kotil. However, it is extremely unlikely that *Gırgır* might have meant to portray the general as a naïve and potentially positive figure; conversely, it is more feasible to imagine that the magazine wanted to show a general who was already intent on becoming a careless mayor and this is exactly why he finds the advice acceptable.

The caricature featuring Kenan Evren

Does the illustration analysed above suggest that the generals could now replace politicians in the cartoons, caricatures and comic strips? A first answer is provided by the full-page cartoon on the cover of the September 21 issue itself (Fig. 13). Here a man is seen hanging a picture on the wall of his office with satisfaction, a calendar next to it reveals that the date is September 13. The picture being hung is a portrait of Evren, and it is replacing a portrait of a sad looking Ecevit and one of a perplexed Demirel, which the man carelessly throws over his shoulders. The new picture is clearly bigger than the previous two,[9] its frame is more elegant; in addition, the previous ones have been hanging on the wall for such a long time that a big spiders web is attached to them.[10]

The office in which the scene is set looks very simple, with no other furniture than a basic desk, a telephone and a carpet. This choice, which is probably to avoid distracting attention from Evren's portrait, does not give much information about the identity of the man; however, a caption describes him as "the man of every (political) era".[11]

His face does not represent any public figure in particular; it is rather his general look that suggests his personality. He is short and overweight, wears a ceremonial suit and two shiny stones that are presumably diamonds, one on his tie and the other on a ring. In the cartooning tradition of Turkey (and not only Turkey), such visual details imply ostentation and showy wealth, which fits our character, too; for, the excessive elegance, the precious jewels, and ultimately the fact that the diamond ring is word on the little finger, create a sharp contrast between wealth and the assimilation of it, suggesting that this character is someone who has become rich quickly, and not necessarily by legal means. He appears corrupt.

The man could be interpreted as a civil servant, for instance a local administrator, who is so pleased to have kept his post that he will be loyal to whoever sits at the top of the hierarchy. Or, he could be a businessman, who foresees a liberalisation of the economy by the junta that will make him his fortune. If the latter is true, *Gırgır* should be recognised the enormous merit of having realised in a few days something that still fails to be fully acknowledged in political analyses of the 1980 coup from time to time, that is that one of the main goals of the military was the adoption of a liberal economy that could eventually rescue

[9] The two portraits are falling towards the observer, and are clearly in the foreground in comparison with the one on the wall. Thus, their smaller dimensions are deliberate and not a result of perspective and proportions.
[10] The spiders web is actually attached to the picture of Ecevit only, but it is fair to assume that its symbolic meaning of being dated, old and old-fashioned applies to the one of Demirel too, as the two portraits are bound to the same fate.
[11] *Her devrin adamı*.

the country from the deep financial crisis in which it seemed to be deadlocked. In this respect, since political violence was the most evident issue to which the regime put an end in the very short term, and since the process of "resolution" of this problem (by means of mass imprisonment, cease fire, etc.) was enforced starting from the first days of military rule, *Gırgır* could have easily dedicated the September 21 cover to it. Instead, the decision of pointing to the economic implications would testify to a deep and immediate understanding of the actual priorities and interests of the generals.

Civil servant or businessman, the man is someone who welcomes the rise to power of Evren with a smirk of satisfaction on his face; thus, he is someone who is likely to profit from the new political order. This attitude is meant to generate a sense of repulsion in the observer that is amplified by his showy wealth as well as by his short stature, which is revealed by the presence of a chair in the scene. In fact, the man has climbed on the chair in order to replace the portrait on the wall, while there is no apparent reason to hang the picture so high. The chair highlights the contrast between the shortness of the man and the high position and imposing dimensions of the portrait, building a metaphor of the power relation that exists between the two. Furthermore, the chair stresses the man's diminutive size as a symbolic externalisation of his moral stature.[12]

In the light of the fact that the issue of September 21 is the one that displays the first reactions of the *Gırgır* team to the military coup, this image also deserves special attention as it is the first attempt to portray the military in power. Here Evren does not appear as an active character, rather he is represented through a painting, in other words as an image within the image. The observer is faced with a portrait that represents the chief of the general staff; thus, by extension, the whole military class. Moreover, since the chief of general staff became head of the junta the day before the one that the scene is meant to represent (September 13, as suggested by the calendar), Evren also embodies the head of state; hence, by extension, the entire ruling class.

What is particularly interesting in this portrait is the absence of any caricatured connotation. Evren is depicted as realistically as possible, with no physical exaggerations or comic details that could turn the portrait into a caricature in the literal sense of the word.

[12] The success of this rhetorical device arises from the fact that it has an equivalent in the oral language that is extensively used in Turkish, that is the way to express a negative judgement on someone who is not honest, genuine and worthy by belittling him or her as *küçük* (little).

Rather, this is an essentially neutral representation within a comic illustration, where the satire is not intended to target Evren or the military ruling class that he embodies.

Clearly, this image was an experiment through which *Gırgır* was testing the level of tolerance of the military. True, it was only a timid, partial attempt to introduce the regime in (and to) graphic satire; nonetheless, it was daring. Indeed, it was anything but obvious for any means of communication to mock the military anyhow, above all in such a visible "window" as on a magazine's cover page, especially a magazine that was already in the limelight for its strong political satire and, moreover, such a short time after the rise of the military to power, when the degree of "patience" of the regime and the possible consequences were not yet clear. Despite this, *Gırgır* ran the risk, at least tentatively, at least once. Actually, it did not take much longer for the magazine, and the media in general, to understand that the regime would not tolerate any kind of ridicule or criticism. Afterwards, Evren and the junta were no longer portrayed in *Gırgır*.

In brief, the question of whether *Gırgır* could replace former politicians with the generals in its graphic satire seems to lead to a negative answer. Nominally, there was no chance to turn the junta into an overt target. Nevertheless, *Gırgır*'s political satire was far from dead.

Vices of the military rule, "vice-targets" of the cartoons

When it became clear that any explicit caricatural depiction of the junta would have meant editorial suicide, in the form of censorship, ban, or even persecution of authors, *Gırgır* became characterised by the flourishing of a wide array of cartoons that called upon political figures who were unmistakably intermingled with the military power. In other words, while avoiding representations of the junta itself, caricatures began to satirise the entourage of the generals, that is to say those civil officers whom the junta had invested with important political duties.

Turgut Özal

The political figure that emerged as the favourite protagonist of *Gırgır*'s cartoons is, unmistakably, Turgut Özal. Özal had been on the political scene since 1965, when he had become Demirel's technical adviser. Afterwards, he had been Head of the State Planning organisation between 1967 and 1971, and, after a period of work in the private sector, he had re-entered the political arena when Demirel regained the leadership of the country in 1979. Demirel entrusted him with the economic planning that the IMF, the World Bank and the OECD required as a condition to release a new credit to Turkey.

In early 1980, Özal's work resulted in what came to be known as "the January 24 decisions",[13] that is to say the reform package that would replace the inward-looking Turkish economy with a neoliberalist model. At least in the first phase, the economic transformation demanded high sacrifice on the part of the population, whose general living standards would be affected dramatically. Not surprisingly, in the highly politicised climate of that period, the series of protests and strikes that were organised as a reaction to the reform package prevented its adoption.

The situation changed when the military stepped in on September 12. As a matter of fact, as previously explained, the resolution of the economic crisis was one of the major concerns that led to the military intervention and, in all probability, was the one that pushed the army to retain power for a long term. In this respect, the military proved its intention to establish continuity with the preceding government and to put in practice the January 24 decisions. This willingness became immediately manifest with the appointment of Özal as Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs. In this way, not only did Özal maintain his responsibilities in the economic sphere but he also became the civil officer with the highest post under the military rule. In brief, he became the highest figure in the military government aside from the generals.[14]

From a satirical point of view, two main features made Özal a core protagonist of *Gırgır*'s cartoons. The first was his physical appearance. Özal was overweight and not particularly tall, he had a thick moustache, dimples, a double chin, short thick hair, and he

[13] *24 ocak kararları*.
[14] This remained true until his resignation due to a banking scandal in 1982. Later, Özal founded his own party and ran for the parliamentary elections of 1983, which saw his rise to power as prime minister. The aforementioned scandal will be treated in the following pages.

wore thick square glasses. These elements offered a fertile ground for comic exaggerations that obviously made him an easy subject for caricature.

The second feature was his own appreciation of the art of cartooning, which, willingly or not, paved the way for the flourishing of a rich variety of Özal representations. Cartoonists describe Özal as someone who loved cartoonists, enjoyed spending time with them, and appreciated cartoons in general. He definitely knew *Gırgır* as he is remembered as a person, probably the only politician, who used to collect the caricatures that the magazine made of him, and who allegedly hung his favourite ones on the walls of his home. That he was familiar with *Gırgır* is proved not only by these anecdotes but also by the fact that he visited its headquarters. In particular, Demirci recalls a visit in 1983, during which cartoonist Tekin Aral offered Özal an original hand-made cartoon, which apparently delighted him.[15]

It should be noted that this relationship was built on a certain degree of dualism on both sides. On the one hand, Özal entertained a relationship with cartoonists notwithstanding the fact that they targeted him in their cartoons; and, on the other, the *Gırgır* team did not hesitate to publish cartoons of Özal while also welcoming him in their offices and presenting him with gifts. However, it would be misleading to imagine that this "love-and-hate" mutual relationship conditioned the scope for criticism of the magazine in some way. For *Gırgır* neither refrained from criticising Özal's policies, as the bitter satire directed at him shows, nor did Özal's personal appreciation of the art form guarantee any special protection against censorship, as was proved by a number of clues (i.e., the impossibility to hold cartoon exhibitions under the regime, the fact that military figures were not targeted, and the episode of censorship that was discussed in the previous chapter). In determining the boundary of legitimacy of satirical cartoons, Özal was evidently on the side of the junta. In the end, this dualism was framed in the coexistence of a formal and an informal dimension of his relation with the cartoonists, but the shift from one dimension to the other did not generate ambiguity.[16]

As predicted, the reforms envisaged by Özal turned out to be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, in the first couple of years of military rule inflation dropped, the GDP increased and so did export activities, all contributing to the stabilisation of the current account balance. On the other hand, however, the January 24 decisions had dramatic

[15] Cihan Demirci in a private interview with the author, February 28, 2011.
[16] The two dimensions are here defined as formal and informal rather than public and private or institutional and personal since Özal's appreciation of cartoons was not concealed from the public opinion; on the contrary, it was a well-known fact. This is a further element that dissipates ambiguity.

consequences for the general prosperity of the population, with a decrease of the growth rate of the national economy causing job losses for 1.5 million people, and with a rise in the price of consumers' goods that was accompanied by a wage drop.

These double-edged consequences are cunningly captured on the cover of the January 4 1981 issue (Fig. 14). Özal is represented as having an unnaturally long and large right arm and hand, and, by contrast, an equally unnaturally short left arm and small hand. In the words of a man behind him, "one is the hand that gives, the other is the one that takes [back]!..". A caption above reveals that the cartoon, thus also the comment, refer to the salary rise that is being decided and announced in those days, together with the increase in the prices of consumer goods.

Özal's figure occupies almost the whole cartoon space; he is portrayed, standing in the middle of a street, as a giant – he is so big that he dwarfs a tree that appears in a corner. Interestingly, and contrary to the usual habit of portraying characters in the act of doing or saying something that the reader observes as an outsider, in this case Özal faces the readers and throws a straightforward look at them. His expression is not intimidating, for the caricatured appearance of the man – stout, hunchbacked, clumsy, with a large jacket hardly fastened at the belly – gives him an overall comic appearance; yet, it is firm, as if Özal was concentrating his efforts to persuade the reader to accept these two-fold policies, like a sort of Uncle Sam of the Turkish economy.

Özal's glance is also significant because of the contrast that it creates compared to the expression of the two other characters that appear in the cartoon. The man who comments on Özal's hands is casting a cynical glare at him, while a woman next to him stares at the politician anxiously. The couple are indeed very expressive; the view of the gigantic man generates anger in the former and fear in the latter. In comparison, Özal's expression looks lost. In relation to the glance of the two by-standers, the reader's perception of Özal's character quickly moves from persuasive to empty: notwithstanding his imposing presence, the politician now appears as someone who finds himself in that place despite himself, someone who was put there to play a role, in other words a puppet in the hands of the military.

The combination of all the features that emerge from this caricature seems to point to the fact that the junta was determined to put in force an extremely tight economic programme and that, precisely for this reason, it was trying to persuade ordinary people that the economic reforms, harsh as they might have been, would have carried benefits for them. The presence

of Özal as a front man matched the same purpose, as he was a civil officer and also an expert in the financial sector, he was a man that the people would have been more keen on accepting than any military figure. What the caricature suggests, however, is that despite the fact that he was not a military man, rather, he was an expert in the economic field, and that he was announcing a wage rise among other decisions, the people would not give him their unconditional trust anyway. Özal was in the political arena before the coup, he had developed the "24 January" decisions months before September 12, and the public would not easily forget that. On the contrary, they would continue looking at him suspiciously in spite of the new image of him as a "good chap" that the regime was trying to promote.

That *Gırgır* does not agree with this image of Özal, which the regime hoped to present, emerges clearly in other cartoons too. Özal is usually depicted as a money and credit hunter, whose job has become a real obsession that affects every aspect of his life.

This is the case, for instance, in a comic strip that is included in a full page dedicated to various aspects of hunting, from tourist hunting by street sellers to the exhibition of fake hunting trophies on the walls. The illustration of interest is a sequence dedicated to "women hunting", that is to say the ways by which men sometimes believe that they can conquer, or at least attract, women. In the first scene a man is distributing some banknotes on the small path that heads to his own house; in the second, we see that the line of banknotes leads beyond the doorstep to the bedroom, indeed to the bed, where the man is lying half-naked waiting for any woman that might arrive. However, in the third and last scene, it is not a woman but Özal who has shown up, having followed the money trail (Fig. 15).

The immediate message of this strip is that Özal's economic policies will affect the life of Turkish citizens up to the realm of the private life, and they will probably threaten people's savings. That said, a deeper reading of the image suggests even more.

The man embodies the stereotype of the jumped-up lout that often appears in cartoons. He is a middle aged, fat, cigar-smoking business man who is so used to getting what he wants with money that he is convinced that women's attention, and affection, can also be bought.[17] The sense of disgust that his look and attitude breed in the reader is soon blunted by Özal's arrival, which evidently generates humour as it is unexpected, unusual, and certainly out of

[17] A caption above the first scene, like a title, states "woman-wife hunting, like in European cartoons". The claim is interesting insofar as it seems to suggest that the practice of showing money to attract women belongs to European culture and is something foreign to Turkey, while, on the contrary, other cartoons of the same era reproduce the model of the rich Turkish business man surrounded by attractive women. The reasons behind the need of making clear that the picture reproduces a foreign model are not clear and could become food for later investigation.

context. Moreover, the comic effect originates also from the position in which the politician is captured, which makes him appear possibly more clumsy than usual, as he is leaning to pick up the money from the floor while the movement of his legs suggests that he is also running fast – while bowed! – in order to gather as many banknotes as possible.

As unappealing as the man on the bed might appear, his attitude toward women serves the purpose of directing the attention toward Özal: the latter has entered the house of a stranger because he is attracted by money, he looks at ease even when he reaches the bedroom, and does not seem to be concerned by the presence of the half-naked man (who, on the contrary, jumps in fear at the sight of the politician). Thus, a subtle parallelism is created between Özal and sex workers, evoking not the victims of the sex market but rather the people who willingly subject their body to the wishes of paying clients. Özal's corruption in a sexually suggestive context alludes to his moral corruption as a politician; to put it simply, his desire for money at all costs.

The fact that the banknotes that appear in this strip are dollars adds a straightforward link to the real circumstances of Turkish finance, showing Özal in a desperate search (hunting) for foreign credit. The international dimension embodied by the foreign currency suggests that who is going to be sacrificed (in the eyes of foreign creditors) is not Özal himself but rather Turkey and its people.

This strip was published on September 14 1980, hence too early to assume that it expressed a judgement on Özal's performance under the junta; nonetheless, subsequent caricatures show that *Gırgır*'s opinion on this matter did not change afterwards.

On January 18 1981 the magazine was issued with a cover caricature entitled "How does Özal succeed in postponing [the payment of Turkey's] foreign debts?" (Fig. 16). The scene captures a threatening Özal in the act of shouting "Either you postpone [the payment of] our debts or I will try to fix up your economy too!.." The recipients of this threat are four terrified men whose precise identity is not clear, but who are likely to be officials of the IMF, OECD, and the World Bank, or representatives of single countries that lend credit to Turkey.

The scene takes place in an empty, yet nicely decorated space, just in front of a closed door that leads to a room where the group appears about to enter. No one except for Özal and the four men appear in the scene, so nobody witnesses the intimidation that is taking place. Özal carries under his arm a dossier whose first page is titled "debts", followed by a country

list that includes the US, England and Germany[18]. This and the environment that surrounds the scene refer to an institutional meeting – probably the establishment of the Economic Evaluation Committee by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in January 1981 – where crucial decisions for the future of Turkey's economy would be discussed. The scene seems to suggest, therefore, that Özal stopped the group in the lobby of the meeting room just before the opening of the summit and, incapable of negotiating Turkey's foreign debit according to procedures, he recurs to alternative methods.

Unlike the previously analysed caricatures, where he appears clumsy and weak, this cartoon portrays a determined Özal who looks highly persuasive, almost frightening, with a severe expression, knitted eyebrow, leaning toward his interlocutors, and pointing a finger at them. Interestingly, here his physical features do not damage the efficacy of his severe attitude. This is not to say that his short legs, large stomach and double-chin are concealed; on the contrary, they are emphasised as usual. Judging from Özal's tough expression and the frightened looks of the four men, the size of the politician strengthens his authoritarian look and stresses his dominating attitude.[19] However, neither his imposing presence and persuasive attitude put him in a positive light, nor do they save him from being the source of humour of the caricature. The fact that the four men are terrified at the idea that he could lay a hand on the economy of their countries is an outspoken sign of the opinion that they have regarding his economic skills.

But, there is more. The very same fact that Özal uses the notion of getting involved in their countries' economy as a threat says a lot about the fact that he himself is well aware of his low capacities in the field. Unavoidably, this is an explicit admission of guilt.

To conclude, the humour in this caricature arises not from the man's physical appearance but from the action that he is performing; his speech and the reaction of his interlocutors all point to the fact that his incapacity in the financial domain is almost unilaterally recognised.

Another explicit admission of guilt appears in a caricature of January 31, 1982 (Fig. 17). As the title suggests, in this cartoon Özal's son[20] has just come home with his school report and is now facing his father's reaction to his unsatisfactory marks. The scene takes

[18] Other country names are likely to be written down, although they are covered by the man's arm.
[19] The only detail that appears as merely comic is the unrealistically short tie that Özal wears; nevertheless, this marginal feature does not affect the visual impact.
[20] Based on the year of realisation of this cartoon, the boy in question should be Özal's youngest son, Efe, who was thirteen years old at that time.

place in a domestic environment, where a furious Özal is running after his son in an attempt to punish him. Both characters are given a voice through a cut and thrust of comments that are longer than average cartoon dialogues; consequently, what catches the attention first is the visual part.

The viewer sees a living room where the interiors are vaguely outlined and consist of an empty picture frame hanging on the wall, a blurred curtain at the window, and a basic carpet on the floor. Everything seems to suggest that beyond institutional life Özal deals with the same problems as any ordinary family – he is portrayed as a common man. His appearance stresses this idea even more, as he is portrayed while wearing a striped pyjama, a white undershirt, and slippers. These clothes convey a "one of us" idea that immediately prompts the viewer to sympathise with him. Actually, the enraged attitude with which he greets his son does not prevent him from looking comic, a feature that is stressed by the fact that he is running back and forth in the room, unable to catch his son, and that he wears only one slipper while holding the other in his hand, ready to strike him.

With the help of the title, "Özal's son also got the school report", humour is generated without reading the dialogue, as the "family drama" that is taking place is clear from the very beginning. However, what the speech balloons disclose is a precise political attack. While running away holding the report, the young boy claims that "According to the last year a ten per cent improvement was experienced. The dead marks were evaluated and with the support of foreign credits I will correct my school report with a forty per cent recovery rate…". In response, the furious father yells "Go fool someone else with these [data]… you [think you can] sell cress to the cress seller!..". Özal's reply is shocking as it suggests that he is very well acquainted with the art of fooling people with empty promises, and that he knows how to play with numbers and data in order to appear convincing. This is an admission of guilt that genuinely comes out of his mouth in a rage and – no coincidence – in the intimacy of the domestic realm, where journalists, microphones and video cameras cannot record him. According to *Gırgır*, this caricature unveils the true Özal, that is to say an able persuader, and a cheat.

This cartoon is possibly one of the sharpest involving the deputy prime minister, for the accusation of intentional dishonesty doubtless stands above those addressing his incapability and lack of concern for the middle class. The date of publication is perhaps no coincidence. Facing the perpetuation of the military rule, the new constitutional project, and the reforms envisaged by the junta that would have slowed the restoration of democracy, the European Commission tightened its policy toward Turkey and the European Parliament

suspended financial aid on January 22 1982. No explicit mention of this decision is made in the magazine, neither in this issue nor in the previous one (January 24 1982); yet, this caricature stands there with the unequivocal message of Özal's untrustworthiness, as if *Gırgır* were suggesting that the EP officers had been looking into Özal's house, unmasking "the cress seller", and realising that further financial aid would not be in safe hands.

To conclude, Özal was portrayed, ridiculed and criticised from a wide range of angles. Essentially, he was extensively targeted as is the case for political figures under democratic rules. Paradoxical as it might seem, in this normality lies the exceptionality: the cartoons that saw Özal as protagonist implied a criticism of the military government as a whole, for putting the economy in his hands and, broadly, for choosing him as the "frontman" of the 1980-1983 rule. The "Özal cartoons" went beyond the mere censure of the man, they were a dangerous attack against the regime.

Özal did not cease to be an important figure for satire after the end of the regime; on the contrary, the fact that the majority of the electorate made him prime minister in the elections of 1983 kept him in the foreground of Turkish politics and, accordingly, of graphic satire. Similarly, the dual relationship between Özal and the satirical world also continued beyond the end of the regime. To give one meaningful example, the *Gırgır* cover that followed Özal's by-pass operation of 1987 was entitled "Dear Özal… May you recover soon... Please take care of yourself... We need you so much. In particular Gırgır needs you even more. Warm regards. The Gırgır-ers."[21]

However, the situation soon changed. Özal, who had been traditionally tolerant of criticism, changed his attitude during the electoral period of November 1987, and even more after his confirmation in power following the said elections. At the end of 1987, in fact, a law was enacted that restricted press freedom with the official aim of protecting minors from

[21] *Sayın Özal... Büyük geçmiş olsun... Aman kendine iyi bak... Bize çok lazımsın. Hele Gırgır'a daha çok lazımsın. Gözlerinden öperiz. Gırgırcılar* (*Gırgır* n. 754). Parallel to the apprehensive and respectful tone an extremely informal and friendly attitude can be detected in this message. This comes, to begin with, with the invocation *aman*, that expresses a "please" pray corresponding not much to a polite form but rather to a colloquial "for goodness sake!". In the second place, the Turkish expression *gözlerinden öperiz* that is chosen as final greeting is usually used when the recipient is a junior or a younger person than the speaker or writer, certainly not someone who holds a significant institutional function. And to conclude, the whole message addresses Özal by using the second person singular "you" instead of the plural one that the linguistic code would certainly demand when addressing a prime minister. Besides the comic tone that is typical of the magazine and that certainly explains the general informality of this message, the choice of this specific final greeting may be ascribed to the personal relation that was cultivated between Özal and the magazine.

inappropriate content,[22] but that was perceived by many as a veiled censorship tool. In early 1988, then, a "Lie Law" was prepared that envisaged heavy pecuniary sanctions for the publication of "false" news, where the definition and evaluation of falsity remained anything but clear. A collective protest organised by the newspaper owners as a reaction prevented the approval of the law; nevertheless, a rise in the cost of paper came to hit the press in an alternative way immediately after, in what appeared as a political concern rather than an economic decision.[23]

This shift in attitude toward satire and the press is indeed puzzling. Doctors of that time attributed Özal's new intolerance to the by-pass operation that he had undergone, and to some extent cartoonists tend to share this opinion today. Notwithstanding this later change, though, throughout the regime Özal was the figure whose representation allowed *Gırgır* to address the military government and question the political performance of the junta in the most direct way.

A side effect of Özal's policies: bankers

A category of cartoons that went hand in hand with the ones that explicitly hit Özal was the one dedicated to bankers. As part of the economic package formulated by Özal, credit and deposit interests were released paving the way for the flourishing of banking institutions of various nature, size and reliability all over the country. The freedom of interests that these institutions enjoyed allowed them to offer creditors extremely appealing interest rates that often exceeded 100 per cent and could even reach 140 per cent. The reform had not contemplated adequate controls in this respect and, generally, when rates proved unrealistically high and impossible to meet for an institution it was already too late:

[22] Law 1117 for the Protection of Minors against Harmful Publications.

[23] This is claimed on the ground that the increase in the cost of paper was presented more as a threat than as a news. The specific circumstance in which it was announced was a party congress in April 1988, where, addressing the press, Özal threatened "You will see the rise that I will make in the cost of the paper for newspapers!" (*Ben gazete kağıdına ne kadar zam yapacağım bilirim!*). Accordingly, a few days later the prime minister announced a 35 per cent rise, mindless of the fact that the price of newspapers had undergone a substantial increase in the previous 24 hours, from 200 to 250 Turkish Lira, due to the rise in the cost of paper that had been imposed the previous months. Since the only paper factory of Turkey (SEKA) belonged to the state, the government had full monopoly on this kind of decision. It is certainly true that the inflation of that decade had multiplied the price of all raw materials and goods, but the case of paper emerges as the most striking one. While, for instance, between 1980 and 1988 the price of bread rose by 3,272 per cent, the price of cigarettes rose 3,233 per cent, fuel by 2,195 per cent, and paper by 7,890 per cent. Cf. Various Authors, "Kılıç Hep Kalemi Kesti. 1860'lardan 1980'lere iktidar-basın ilişkileri," *NTV Tarih* No. 15, (April 2010): 32-42, 42.

bankruptcy was declared and the banker in question would possibly have already fled abroad with the capital that savers had entrusted to him.

The speculative pattern encouraged by this monetary policy led to dramatic consequences, especially for middle-class savers who had put their savings in the hands of small banks and private brokers. Among the darkest examples of the time let it suffice to mention the dramatic end of Servet Acar, a banker who committed suicide leaving behind a 450 million lira debt, or the radical action taken by furious savers who attacked the office of a banker who had disappeared with their money,[24] or the case of a man who committed suicide when facing the impossibility of obtaining neither interest nor his savings back from a banker.[25]

In spite of several banking scandals of this kind the speculative venture was made possible for two years, until the Central Bank of Turkey adopted new monetary surveillance measures in July 1982. Yet, until then, 250 cases of bankruptcy were declared, two bankers were killed, ten ran away, five were arrested and five were imprisoned. Overall, the banking crisis involved approximately 400 billion liras and 2.5 million savers.

The case that came to constitute the peak of the "Bankers' scandal" was that of Banker Kastelli, real name Abidin Cevher Özden, one of the numerous figures who made their fortune in the aftermath of the January 24 decisions and who became the symbol of this uneven banking system in 1982, when his financial adventure came to an end. The latter founded an independent banking institution in 1978 and, like many others, benefited immensely from the release of interests applied by Özal: his initial budget of 500,000 lira grew to 100 billion lira in three years and Kastelli became one of the major bankers of the time. In June 1982, however, facing the impossibility of paying the interest owed to his clients he fled to Switzerland and then Tunisia, where he was arrested in September and brought to Turkey with the accusations of fraud and credit abuse. The Kastelli incident was indeed the most spectacular of these banking scandals due to Özden's visibility and the high capital that he disposed of. As a consequence, Özal was forced to resign in July 1982 and the government was forced to revise the monetary policy.

[24] On December 22 1981, a group of creditors set fire to the Ankara office of Yalçın Doğan, a young banker who ran away leaving no trace of himself nor of the 300 million lira savings that people had deposited in his bank.
[25] On December 27 1981, İsmail Mertoğlu, a labourer who had earned one million lira by working abroad, shot himself following a period of depression caused by the fact that the banker with which he had entrusted his capital did not pay him the due interests and refused to give him his savings back. Following the tragic event, the banker in question, the Ankara-based Mustafa Atalay, announced that he would pay the due money to savers and was not subject to any legal measures whatsoever.

Gırgır satirised the new banking system without hesitation from the very beginning with a series of cartoons that targeted several bankers of the time, above all Kastelli.

Initially, bankers were depicted as businessmen whose sphere of activity was becoming increasingly influential and likely to affect a significant number of domains, from private single clients to various business sectors.

In this respect, on September 28 1980 the magazine published a cartoon in the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* where a pedestrian scene was represented (Fig. 18). The spot is crowded by street sellers of newspapers, ice-cream and *simit* (the Turkish bagel), in brief they are sellers that could be found in any public space in Turkey like a park, a square, or along the seashore. What makes the scene more unusual, however, is the fact that in this case the street sellers are bankers, among the emerging ones of the time: the bagel seller's apron states "Banker Mervet the *simit* maker" and the ice-cream kiosk claims to sell the "Delicious Pastelli ice-cream", where Mervet and Pastelli clearly stand for the bankers Servet and Kastelli according to *Gırgır*'s habit of misspelling real names in order to increase the humour. Due to linguistic ambiguity the two notices do not make clear whether the bankers are actively involved in the sales activities or only sponsor them, nonetheless a pedestrian's comment suggests the former hypothesis as he declares, while observing the frenetic sale activities: "These bankers are also disposed to do any kind of job themselves so that people's money do not go into the hands of other [bankers]". This suggests that it is becoming common practice to resort to any method to attract clients' capital and that bankers such as Servet and Kastelli do not represent an exception in this respect.

The habit of attracting savers, hence money, by any means was emphasised for a few more months, as is demonstrated by a cartoon of January 4 1981 entitled "Bankers war" (Fig. 19). The cartoon portrays a gunfight during a bank robbery; as the comment made by a worried customer suggests, a guerrilla group "inclined towards banking", has entered the headquarters of Banker Kastelli (in this case too, "Pastelli") and is kidnapping three customers. The paradoxical aspect of the scene clearly arises from two facts, namely the

identity of the robbers, who are bankers themselves[26], and the fact that robbers are not aiming at banknotes but at bank clients, suggesting that their value overcomes that of tangible capital.

Here lies the criticism that the scene aims to express: since the kidnappers too are bankers they are not likely to hold the hostages to ransom, then why should savers have greater value than the capital that they own? The only possible answer points to the fact that bankers are left free to collect clients' savings in return for few guarantees, thus they might make a profit from their uncontrolled power of not paying the agreed interest rates, if not from the opportunity to escape with savers' money *tout court*.

The cartoon denounces the lack of regulations safeguarding customers' interests and, unmistakably, the fact that outfoxing clients is a common practice among bankers rather than an exception. So is also immorality broadly speaking, since both Pastelli's men and the kidnappers have weapons at hand and are opening fire against each other despite the risk of hurting the hostages, the employees, and other customers.

As seen above, "customer hunting" was the most satirised aspect of the banker cartoons at first and within this thematic frame it is already possible to detect a trend shift between 1980 and 1981 from a rather soft depiction of bankers' widening domain to an unhesitant unveiling of their illegal potential. The pattern changed in 1982 in conjunction with the emergence of banking scandals and cases of bankruptcy; accordingly, the focus of cartoons gradually moved toward the low guarantees that private bankers offered to savers and their blatant misconduct.

On January 3 1982, *Gırgır* dedicated three cartoons to bankers who are not keen on returning money to customers.

One portrays two strangers who cross each other in a street, one is about to enter a bank while the other has just left (Fig. 20). The latter holds a bag under his arm which must contain the savings that he has just withdrawn from the bank, as he mumbles: "No way, mate! I will go and deposit my money at Ali Ağca... At least he has no chance of running away!..". Interestingly, the man could have decided to move his savings to another bank; instead, he deliberately skips any bank option, suggesting that not only the banker in question but all of them are not trustworthy, and turns to such an infamous criminal as Ağca, the Grey Wolves

[26] They could also be kidnappers engaged by competitor bankers in order to accomplish the kidnapping professionally; what is relevant here is the fact that the fight involves two groups of professional bankers rather than being fuelled by a criminal organisation.

militant who murdered journalist Abdi Ipekçi in February 1979 and attempted to kill Pope John Paul II in May 1981. The choice of Ağca in this cartoon should not be overlooked. The same political message would have been efficient had the angry man mentioned any other imprisoned criminal of the time; despite that, a reference is made to possibly the worst example insofar as Ağca made himself known worldwide becoming a cause of shame for Turkey at international level. That Ağca is deliberately chosen with the intention of comparing bankers to the worst delinquents is even more feasible in the light of the fact that he was not in the foreground of the news in that period.[27] It goes without saying that comparing bankers to such an infamous criminal is itself a strong position. If we add the fact that the bank client ultimately deems Ağca to be more reliable that any banker, the accusation becomes unmistakable.

Next to this cartoon, on the same page, a comic strip expresses the low esteem that bankers are earning themselves in the eyes of potential clients (Fig. 21). In the first scene a man is violently hitting another man on the head with a wooden stick, leaving him stunned on the floor; in the next one, the background reveals that the victim of the attack is a banker, who is now standing – although still bleeding, holding a huge quantity of banknotes while observing his aggressor leaving. The latter comments, satisfied: "Good... I have enough strength to beat a banker. I can deposit my money with no fear... at the moment of withdrawing it, it will be easy...".

On the back cover, then, a cartoon offers an "ancient times version" of banking with Nasrettin Hoca in the shoes of a banker (Fig. 22). "Banker Nasreddin" greets a customer at the entrance to his bank, saying: "Come on buddy, go back to your business. You believe that money is given birth to, so why don't you believe that it can die?", where the birth refers to the creation of extra capital out of nowhere, that is to say interest, and allows a personification of money that leads to the natural consequence that money may also disappear as inevitably as living creatures will die.

This satirical triptych, although not referring to Kastelli in person, insistently denounces the bankers' practice of retaining customers saving with no right to do so; the issue at stake was so crucial and present in ordinary people's lives that *Gırgır* could afford to dedicate numerous cartoons to it, even on the same page, without running the risk of boring the readers.

[27] Ağca was arrested on the day of the assassination attempt on the Pope (May 13 1981) and then sentenced in Italy on July 22. Nothing relevant happened in December 1981 or January 1982 that could have brought him to the limelight of Turkish news, hence of *Gırgır* again.

A comic strip dedicated to Kastelli in person appears in the following issue, of January 10 1982 (Fig. 23). Here the banker is handing out badges to a group of people whose appearance hints to the fact that they are wealthy, seemingly the wealthiest clients of his bank, which is why they are being given badges. A man interrupts the ceremony to ask Kastelli: "Mister Cevher, I deposited so much money into your [bank]. Won't you stick a badge on me [too]?". In the following scene we see that Kastelli has granted the man's wish but, instead of putting the rosette on his chest as in the case of the other awarded character, his has stuck it on his bottom. It should be noted that until his escape Kastelli was well integrated in show business, being connected to the circles of cinema, television and music stars; the wealthy people of the first scene embody this world and the differences between them and the speaking man become evident through their fashionable clothes, hairstyles and naturally elegant poses. The bitter truth is that when it comes to Kastelli, ordinary men cannot even claim what they are owed: the banker will not concede that they too have deposited savings in his bank and, conceivably, when claiming their money back he will pretend that he has no information for them or recollection of their deposits.

A relevant number of cartoons was then dedicated to Kastelli's absconding and his end. On September 12 1982 a subtle cartoon explains how it was possible for the banker to flee the country in the early summer according to *Gırgır* (Fig. 24). As suggested by the sign, the scene is set in Yeşilköy, the neighbourhood of Istanbul that hosts the city's principal airport (the only one at that time). A flight has just taken off, two men stare at the plane and one comments: "Gee, look at the guy there! He [just] said 'I'll give you 85 per cent interest' and he fooled the pilot..". It remains unclear whether the men are members of the airport staff or policemen who have arrived too late to prevent the flight from leaving; what is relevant, anyway, is the accusation that Kastelli relies on empty promises as *passe-partout* in any context: while being in serious trouble as a consequence of promising the impossible to his bank clients he not only decides to run away instead of taking responsibility for his misconduct, but also adopts the same trick to persuade the pilot to help him escape.

On the same page is another cartoon involving the Kastelli scandal; while the previous one was meant to show the first step of Özden's escape, this one claims to show how that escape ended (Fig. 25). The scene is set in an open space where a trap has been set in the hope of attracting the banker. The rudimental trap consists of a large, human-sized lid that stands

open supported by a stick, within which a curled-up man is holding a stack of banknotes and patiently waiting. Two men hiding behind a tree hold a rope connected to the stick that they will pull to trap Kastelli when he appears. On seeing the banker approaching greedily, one of the men exclaims: "Didn't I tell you that he can't resist [the appeal of] a retiree who has just drawn his pension...". Simple as it might appear, the humour of this scene highlights the fact that Kastelli was so money-thirsty that he would even risk his freedom for a stack of banknotes.

The bankers cartoons were a significant part of *Gırgır* between 1980 and 1982, and they then gradually ceased to be so prominent with the adoption of the new monetary control methods that prevented a new wave of such banking scandals, and definitely with the dimming of the spotlight on Kastelli. Knowingly or not, the fiscal freedom had created a factory of deception and fraud. While the first smaller banking scandals could have hinted at a monetary regulation change, nothing was done in this respect until Kastelli's escape burst into the media. Before that moment *Gırgır* repeatedly denounced the contradictions and risks of interest freedom for two years, blaming the architects and the promoters of the January 24 decisions, hence Özal and the regime. Özal's resignation at the peak of the "Bankers' scandal" ultimately testifies to the unmistakable level of reciprocity between his policy and banking dynamics, and thus to the relevance of these cartoons in a political perspective.

Orhan Aldıkaçtı

While the choice of Kastelli and other bankers to criticise the junta unavoidably passed through the performance of Özal, other cartoons used as protagonists political figures that, like Özal, had a direct link with the military as they had been invested with a political function by the regime. One of these was Professor Orhan Aldıkaçtı.

The military had taken power convinced that a re-definition of power balances was necessary in a multitude of public domains and that, predictably, the first agent of such transformation would be the state. The former constitution produced by the 1960-1961 regime was invalidated and a new one was put in place in late 1981, when an advisory council was elected by the consultative assembly to perform this task. The council counted fifteen members, headed by Aldıkaçtı, jurist and dean of the Faculty of Jurisprudence of the Istanbul University. A first draft of the new constitution was presented in the summer of 1982 and

approved after several changes in late September, after which it was made public and its adoption was subjected to popular referendum.

The constitution envisaged increasing the power of the NSC and of the president, and put an end to the independence of institutions, among which the judiciary, parties and associations; it also redefined freedom of the press, of trade unions and of organisations. To quote Kalaycıoğlu, "the main objective of General Evren and associates was to render the Turkish political system stable, while keeping a façade of democracy."[28] The constitution was also meant to rein in individuals' freedoms so as to assure social order; in this respect civil rights and liberties were limited and religious and moral education was made compulsory at school in order to provide an alternative moral guide to drive young generations away from leftist ideologies and politics in general. Lastly, the constitution also determined that Evren would become president of the republic for a seven-year term.

The date of the constitutional referendum was established as of November 7 1982. Voting was made mandatory upon pain of a fine and of losing ballot access for five years; moreover, three weeks prior to the referendum criticism of the constitution and of the speeches of the junta in its support were forbidden by decree. In the end, 90 per cent of the electorate voted and, not surprisingly in the light of the institutionalised threats in case of abstention and a no vote, 91.37 per cent of them voted in favour of the new constitution.

As stated above the constitution committee came up with a first draft in the summer, on July 7. This version immediately met heavy criticism that characterised the whole period of negotiations in the consultative assembly, until the first round of votes in August ended with an unexpected positive result. Its final version was finally set on September 23, when the second round of votes was completed; its content was then released on October 19 and the preparations of the referendum began. Political cartoons about the new constitution went hand in hand with this process, but it was especially in the time lapse between the beginning of the drafting of the constitution and the final approval in the constitutional assembly that caricatures of Aldıkaçtı flourished.

Two trends emerge regarding these cartoons. In one case, discontent concerning the constitution "in progress" and doubts regarding the benefits that the latter would give to the country are expressed. Let it suffice to take as example a subtle cartoon that was published on September 5 (Fig. 26). In 1982 the newly founded non-profit non-governmental organisation

[28] Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *Turkish Dynamics: Bridge across Troubled Lands* (New York and Basingstoke, 2005), 128.

Orbis International began its first worldwide itinerary with its Flying Eye Hospital, the aircraft, which was kitted out as an ophthalmic hospital would fly into developing areas to cure avoidable blindness from country to country. In late August, the airplane landed in Turkey, touching down in Ankara and Istanbul, and *Gırgır* did not miss out on the opportunity to capitalise on the event in the framework of its political satire. In the cartoon of September 5, the Flying Eye Hospital is parked at the airport of Istanbul, identifiable thanks to the "Yeşilköy" sign that partially pokes out in the background; the airplane is recognisable through the "Orbis" sign and its amusingly stylised logo that, while normally representing an eye, it is here turned into a button, even resembling a doughnut.[29] A doctor and nurse are standing on the threshold of the plane, ready to welcome Turkey's patients and the former looks quite puzzled at the scene that is taking place before his eyes. In fact, a man is being dragged to the hospital by force and, while approaching, the man who is taking – literally pushing – him there addresses the doctor frantically, asking: "Would you perform an eye transplant on Mr. Aldıkaçtı? He cannot see his future so well...".

So, we immediately know that the man who, according to the cartoonist, is in urgent need of ophthalmic attention is Aldıkaçtı.

The second sentence is somewhat ambiguous regarding what the professor "cannot see" according to the speaker. The word *ileri*[30] means "the future", "the time yet to come", "the time which lies just ahead"; accordingly, the claim that Aldıkaçtı cannot see the future could mean that the constitution whose creation he was leading was putting the future of civil society (and the country in general) in danger as it was a slap in the face of democracy. In this case, the eye transplant would open his eyes both metaphorically and physically to the consequences of such a constitution and eventually drive the constitution on a different path.

However, the presence of the possessive adjective suffix *–si* (his) moves the humour to a different level, suggesting that the future at stake is in principle Aldıkaçtı's own. Should one read this as an intimidation? Certainly not. The claim refers to the lively debate that the constitution had caused since its first submission to the constitutional assembly, which was making its destiny uncertain due to a high risk of rejection; consequently, Aldıkaçtı's future is uncertain insofar as he cannot predict for how long he and the commission will be busy with

[29] The original logo of the organisation consists of a dot that embodies the globe seen from above and around which a plane is flying, leaving a long wake. The latter is oval rather than round as it normally is; in this way it composes the outline of an eye whose pupil is the dot-globe. In the cartoon, instead, the logo is turned into two small and slightly irregular concentric circles, that recall a button, or even a doughnut, more than an eye. Drawing objects in a comic way, as it was the case for characters, was a technique often adopted in the magazine to strengthen the humour by diminishing their value and credibility.

[30] The full original sentence is *Ilerisini pek iyi göremiyor*.

creating, deleting and amending articles. In this respect, the cartoon stresses the unsuccessful outcome of the professor's effort in producing a constitution that has not yet met the expectations of the constitutional assembly; it is a personal defeat that the possessive suffix hints at.

In addition, it goes without saying that if the future of the constitution is uncertain, then the future of the whole nation is also uncertain. This further meaning is suggested by the action that accompanies the comment. The man is pushing Aldıkaçtı toward the doctor almost against his will, the professor looks anxious and the movement of his feet suggests that he is trying to resist, though only passively, the man's action. The fact that he is not going to hospital freely is crucial here: a third person has established that an important, not to say drastic intervention is needed for him. This person, who does not embody any political figure stands as a representative of "the anonymous ones", that is to say the nation. In other words, an unknown man (the people) is demanding for Aldıkaçtı (the constitution) to undergo an operation (a drastic change from the path it has taken) that is perhaps frightening, hard to endure and to overcome (disapproval of the constitutional assembly, of the junta) but also worth it for its long-term results (fairness, democracy, people's peace of mind).

At this point one could argue that the same explanation could also lead to the opposite result, which is that the anonymous man embodies the constitutional assembly that is pushing toward a significant change – i.e. the new constitution – and is impatient to see its outcome. Nonetheless, this hypothesis is to be excluded mainly for two reasons. One is the specific critical moment in which the cartoon appeared, that is to say when the constitution "of the regime" was already in progress (for this interpretation to be true the cartoon should have been published before the advisory council started to draft it). The other is the fact that according to the cartoon code an organisation that is based on solidarity and provides medical help like Orbis simply cannot be chosen to symbolise something evil, unfair and undemocratic, and the same applies to its aircraft and doctors. To conclude, the power relation between Aldıkaçtı and the other man clears up the ambiguity that was left open by the presence of the possessive adjective suffix; ultimately, besides stressing Aldıkaçtı's failure so far, the cartoon unmistakably denounces that the new constitution is putting civil society at risk, thus an intervention is urgently needed to avoid it.

As exemplified by this cartoon, the comics that foresee a dark scenario for the nation in case the new constitution is adopted tend to portray the head of the constitution committee as a non-acting character, in other words as a personification of the constitution who passively

appears in the satirical scenes allowing *Gırgır* to express an opinion on the constitution itself rather than on the man. Conversely, the second group of Aldıkaçtı cartoons unequivocally condemns the man himself for his own working methods, values, and interests.

The issue of September 5 1982 displays an example of this trend too, among which a cartoon of the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* is worth mentioning for its basic yet powerful satire (Fig. 27). In this caricature Aldıkaçtı is sitting at a desk during a public meeting where he invites the "esteemed citizens"[31] to express their opinion on the constitution. The professor looks patient and calm, he has a paternal expression and seems keen on welcoming ideas, comments and criticism; pity that two bottle tops poke out from his ears suggesting that he is only pretending to be willing to enter into a dialogue with the people, while the truth is that he is not even listening. The falsity of the man is emphasised by the fact that he does not wear earplugs but rather two big wine corks, showing that he is not even ashamed of his attitude.

A comic strip of September 20, 1982 follows the same trend. Here (Fig. 28), in the first scene Aldıkaçtı is portrayed while playing a basic game of chance in front of a crowd; he is the one that drives the game and he looks particularly intense while showing his closed fists and asking "Come on, guess in which hand of mine the [little] stone is [hidden]?", to which two men reply "Left!" and "Right!". In the following scene the professor opens his hands and announces, satisfied: "Heh...heh the stone was in my right hand… the majority of you could not guess… so another constitutional article has gone approved...". In this way it is being suggested to the reader that the men who take part in the game are not an ordinary crowd but the members of the constitutional assembly, and Aldıkaçtı is negotiating the new constitution with them essentially by betting on it, article by article, no matter the content. Interestingly, for the first time the accusation involves not only him but the whole assembly, which is rarely depicted in the magazine and which is this time involved for its complicity in the constitutional disaster that is taking place.

A multitude of *Gırgır* pages hosted cartoons on Aldıkaçtı and, as far as the summer and autumn of 1982 are concerned, the professor emerged as one of the privileged characters, being outdone in terms of representation only by Özal. As for the latter also in the case of the former the physical traits were usually exaggerated, the expressions and movements often

[31] *Evet sayın vatandaşlar. Anayasa içim görüşlerinizi bekliyorum.*

made clumsy, and in this case too the caricaturisation of the figure was not the final aim of the cartoon but rather one of the elements through which a particular aspect of his political performance was being denounced. As is shown by the examples mentioned above, the magazine did not spare criticism and accusations of any kind, questioning Aldıkaçtı's skills and even his honesty.

If a digression into the domain of written satire is allowed, like Özal, Aldıkaçtı did not escape textual criticism. An extraordinary piece of written political satire concerning him and the constitution appears on September 5 1982 next to the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* section. Here the author (anonymous) addresses the professor as if he were an amateur cartoonist who was publishing his first cartoon in the magazine. The tone is therefore serious as far as remarks, criticism and suggestions for improvement are provided; though, obviously, it is ironic too.

The corner is titled *Çiçeği Burnunda Anayasacılar...*, a paraphrase of the original "Cartoonists with a flower in the nose" that is turned for the occasion into "Those of the constitution with a flower in the nose". The title is accompanied by the logo, adapted too: while it is usually characterised by the face of a young man who has a flower growing out of his nose (sometimes from an ear), here Aldıkaçtı's face is used instead. Then the commentary begins, like an ordinary comment on a "cartoon" that does not need to be published in the magazine for it is well known and debated anywhere:[32]

> "You are doing well with your job. The only thing is that ... you fell too much under the influence of master illustrators like Koç, Sabancı and Narin. Do not plan too many things; because of this mixing you have confused everything. Draw actions in abundance. Work on actions like bending and stretching. Most of your humour rests upon word play. These word plays have been used a lot in the past. Actual humour must be in the picture. Cartooning is also the art of exaggeration but you exaggerated a bit too much. It happens [of course] if you draw the first things that come to your mind in a hurry. There is no point in the humour of your cartoons about labourers, the youth and the press... If you continue working so fast I am sure that we will soon see you on our back cover and in many important places. Good luck."

[32] It was well-known in the sense that the elaboration of the new constitution was one of the hottest themes of the summer; however, as previously made clear, its content was not made available until late October.

Another comment is addressed to another figure of the constitution "with a flower in the nose", namely Şener Akyol – public spokesman of the constitutional commission:

> "I am sorry I couldn't reply to your letter on time. But we have to reply to [so] many people like you! That's why your turn has come only now… When I saw your work I quite liked it. At least I quite appreciated the works that deal with the problems of your ambit and voice them... While drawing, show interest in people as much as you do for properties and cars. Don't draw on pieces of paper that are as small as a stamp. Do not even draw on papers as big as a sheet. The ideal would be if you don't draw at all. But... No, ok, do draw... May everyone see what is in your illustrations."

The various features criticised in these two comments are, in order: pleasing businessmen, lack of experience and professionalism, lying, breaking the limits of fairness, lack of organisation and method, lack of concern for specific social categories and haste in the case of Aldıkaçtı; irrelevance of his role, lack of interest in the people and their well-being in the case of Akyol. Altogether, the metaphor of the constitution as an amateur cartoon allows the magazine to attack the constitution-makers, Aldıkaçtı in particular, without reserve, and to adopt an irreverent tone that leaves no doubt about *Gırgır*'s disapproval of them.

In conclusion, satire against Aldıkaçtı abounded in parallel to the making of the new constitution and took many forms and tones through which the professor emerged as acting unprofessionally and above all against the interest of civil society.

İhsan Doğramacı

In addition to Özal and Aldıkaçtı, a third (and last) man of the entourage of the junta was abundantly mocked in *Gırgır*, this is Professor Doctor İhsan Doğramacı, who came to the limelight along with the creation of the Council of Higher Education (CHE) in 1981.

On November 4 1981, the NSC approved a Higher Education Code that envisaged the creation of a Council of Higher Education, an inter-university council that would be entrusted with control over all previous existing councils and would fulfil the purposes of establishing the objectives of higher education and bringing together all the higher education institutions

of the country (except for the ones linked to the armed forces) under a unified legal framework. The Council would also set the principles that would govern all the mechanisms, duties, and issues related to teaching, education and research; it would have the authority to assess the suitability of teaching staff members based on their scientific merit; and, ultimately, it would have the power to decide on the careers of teachers and even students. In brief, the Council would become the supreme decision-making authority in the Higher Education sector.

Since the day it was made public, the Higher Education Code was subject to severe criticism especially by professors, who denounced the fact that it would deprive universities of their scientific and administrative autonomy. Premier Ulusu took part in the debate replying that the Code was to protect scientific sovereignty, confirming once more which ones were the priorities and concerns of the regime. Accordingly, the formation of the Council of Higher Education was pursued despite criticism and its cadre was announced on December 21. Its members were chosen by the head of state among university rectors (eight), the council of ministers (six), professors who did not hold inter-university council membership (eight), the ministry of education (two) and the department of the chief of staff (one). Among the twenty-five members Doğramacı was appointed chairman of the Council and remained chairman until 1992.

A paediatrician by profession, Doğramacı was an internationally known and locally respected figure by the time of his involvement in the university reform of the junta. In Turkey, he had founded the Child Health Department of the Ankara University Medical School, which gradually led to the foundation of Hacettepe University, one of the leading medicine-related state universities whose growth Doğramacı had significantly helped through fundraising and donations. He had become rector of that university and president of the rectors' council. Worldwide, he was affiliated to the United Nations through multiple commitments, having been one of the founders of the World Health Organization and co-ratifier of its constitution, and by 1981was a member of the executive board of the United Nations Children's Fund and president of its Turkish National Committee. He was also a member of the International Children's Centre in Paris and executive director of the International Paediatric Association, of which he had previously been president.

Despite his positive record, the chairmanship of the Council of Higher Education affected the public image of the professor to a large extent. As explained above, the Council was about to subject all universities to close state supervision and move education onto a uniform flattened level, causing resentment among professors and rectors. It was not the idea

of standardisation itself that caused disconcert, rather the fact that the state would establish what was to be taught and how, for it was not the level to be standardised in favour of high quality teaching but the programmes and their contents for the sake of a centralised scrutiny. As Doğramacı in person declared, "at 9 in the morning, when the school bell rings, I must be aware of [for instance] on Monday morning which lesson is being taught in the Economics faculty of no matter which university, which topics, and how they are treated".[33]

Moreover, the power to determine the suitability of professors that the Code of Higher Education entrusted the Council translated into a *de facto* power to dismiss academic staff on an arbitrary basis, and it did not take long for the Council to initiate a real purge. By November 1982, less than one year after the establishment of the Council, 148 scholars had lost their jobs. This academic cleansing hit the personnel of universities all over Turkey, from Izmir (Ege University) to Konya (Selçuk University), and Ankara (Gazi University and Ankara University) to Trabzon (Karadeniz Technical University), and it did not cease until the end of the military rule, coming to affect not only scholars working within the country but also Turkish academics abroad.

Since the Council could dismiss professors by simply advancing the explanation that "their employment as research and teaching incumbents [was] deemed unsuitable"[34], the hypothesis that such decisions were made not on the grounds of their (lack of) scientific merit spread fast. Both the press and public opinion did not fail to notice that those being removed from their posts were actually left-wingers, those scholars who had emerged as opponents of the military coup and of the newly founded Council. Despite the authorities' declarations that a ridding of employees based on their sympathy for leftist ideas was out of question, nothing disproved the allegation that this was precisely the case and that it responded to a command from the headquarters of the generals.

As a consequence, and notwithstanding the praiseworthy results that Doğramacı had previously achieved in the fields of health and education, the new circumstances in which his name emerged, that is as president of the Council, earned him criticisms of being the man responsible for the phenomenon of unjustified dismissals, the right-hand man of the junta in getting rid of scholars who dared to question the military's activities.

Satirical representations of Doğramacı were concentrated mostly in September 1982. In the *Gırgır* issue of September 12, a cartoon shows one of the practical aspects of the higher

[33] Doğramacı in a conversation with Emre Kongar in Emre Kongar, *12 Eylül Kültürü* (Istanbul, 2007), 211.
[34] *Araştırma ve oğretim görevlisi olarak çalıştırılmaları uygun bulunmayan*

education reform and the fact that, to put it as its title, "CHE has put [literally, left] former students in a difficult situation" (Fig. 29). The scene is set in an operating theatre, where a doctor is getting ready to begin operating. Doğramacı has entered the room, unexpectedly, it can be assumed, and is reproaching the doctor by pointing a finger at him and declaring that "We don't care if you happened to become doctor 30 years ago. According to C.H.E. you need to be graduate. Leave the operation immediately. And make the other people whom you cured ill [again]!..". The doctor responds with a surprised and quizzical glance, while the patient, still conscious, watches incredulously and terrified at the same time.

The scene is depicted in a simple and neutral way, in the sense that the operating theatre is represented basically yet realistically, no comic device is adopted in the portrayal of objects and people,[35] and Doğramacı's traits are not caricaturised inasmuch as a caption is deemed necessary to identify him. In other words, the satire derives entirely from Doğramacı's words.

While reproaching, almost threatening the doctor, the president of the Council of Higher Education refers to the fact that the new Code of Higher Education has introduced a new compulsory university degree in medicine. That his reproach to the doctor is nonsense becomes immediately evident from the simple fact that it would not be ethical, nor professional, nor probably even possible to return a cured patient to the status of an ill patient; in this respect, Doğramacı's demand is absurd, to say the least, and it creates an immediately recognisable level of humour. At deeper level, a further reflection discloses the actual accusation that this cartoon intends to make.

The reader is faced with a doctor who sees his right to work denied because of a change of rules and parameters that have rendered his qualifications useless. Doğramacı appears so convinced by and proud of the rules set by the new Code and Council that he arrogantly doubts the doctor's professionalism, as if the new rules had invalidated not only his qualifications but his ability too, notwithstanding the fact that he has been practising medicine legally for thirty years.

Doğramacı's haughtiness becomes manifest in the very first sentence, as he doubts that the man deserves his position as a doctor. In fact, it should be noted that while the most neutral and common way to say "to become a doctor" would be *doktor olmak*, the expression *doktor çıkmak* is chosen instead. Since the verb *çıkmak* means "to come out", "to emerge", its use suggests that according to Doğramacı the man became a doctor almost by accident,

[35] As a matter of fact, the patient's expression is comic, but it becomes so in reaction to the words pronounced by Doğramacı, it would not be so otherwise.

without merit. His assumption derives from the fact that the man received his medical training under an educational framework that existed prior to the one that Doğramacı now embodies, different in values and content from the one that he is now promoting, an educational system that he has contributed to abandon and which he is now distancing. Doğramacı's words are offensive not only toward the doctor but also toward the makers of the previous higher education system, as he is essentially accusing them of having allowed people like the doctor in question – whom he finds incompetent based on no real reason[36] – to work.

This attitude could have been acceptable had Doğramacı been a *super partes* observer monitoring the status of training in the medical field; it could have been reasonable to some extent also had he contested the training of a professional in a different discipline, for instance an architect, an engineer, or a lawyer. By contrast, none of these was the case *per se*, for Doğramacı was first of all a doctor and broadly speaking a front line member of some significant health organisations. Hence, what should the reader make of his attitude in the light of the fact that his career had developed in multiple directions under the umbrella of health care long before the foundation of CHE? In the cartoon Doğramacı adopts the first person plural ("We don't care") since he is speaking in the name of the Council; however, the *Gırgır* readership of the time might not have failed to notice that he himself was a doctor as much as the one that he reproaches in the cartoon.

Following the logic of the fictional Doğramacı's discourse, what is suggested here is that if the titles and training obtained in the pre-CHE era have no value, if doctors who qualified under parameters different from the ones set by the council should step back, then Doğramacı is the first one to be deemed an "imperfect" doctor, and he too should adapt himself to the new standards, renounce the merits that he was attributed in the medical field and, consequently, renounce his position within the council that is essentially rooted in them. In brief, the words addressed to the doctor have a boomerang effect. Nevertheless, this implicit self-accusation does not seem to worry the paediatrician at all: his position as president of the Council has made him arrogant and self-confident enough to mischievously point the finger at others and threaten them based on accusations whose guilt, if any, he shares.

If that were not enough, Doğramacı's words betray an unethical understanding of the power that a professional position might offer, as he conceives the idea that doctors may play

[36] The doctor of this cartoon is an anonymous one, he is not explicitly linked to any problem, accident nor scandal that could eventually make him deserve losing his job; he rather embodies the category of doctors as a whole. That he is not guilty of negligence is proved also by the fact that Doğramacı makes reference to the patients that the doctor cured in the past, admitting, though only between the lines, that he is competent.

with the lives of people by making cured patients ill again. Such an overt lack of professional ethics in the medical field also casts strong doubts regarding his honesty in his new role at the head of the Council.

Overall, what emerges is an image of an unscrupulous man who is keen on taking advantage of his position and of the high esteem in which he is held to promote and eventually cloak practices and decisions that are in sharp contrast with the positive public image of which he benefited so far and that earned him the presidency of CHE.

A cartoon published on September 26 1982 attempts to show the impact of the higher education reform on university access and the loosening of its limits (Fig. 30). As the caption explains:

> "Doğramacı will admit to higher education all students who get more than 300 points... Thousands of students who heard this have gathered in front of high schools amid yells of joy. But the faculties that announced that they will admit students have no professors nor buildings nor books. How and where will [our] dear Doğramacı, Head of those of CHE,[37] squeeze the 130 thousand students who obtained over 300 points?"

The cartoon shows a building outside which an endless number of young people are patiently queuing. The building is meant to host a university and what takes place is visible only to the reader, to whom the scene is presented facing one side of the building, while the students who are about to enter can only see the other side, along which the queue develops, and of the front face, where the main (and probably only) access to the interior is located. The narrative of the scene hints that once they get inside, students reach the upper floor to be received by Doğramacı in person; what happens during this meeting is not shown, as the

[37] The term that appears here is *Yökçübaşı*. Due to the word's position at the beginning of the sentence in the original it is impossible to scientifically determine whether the capital letter is used only according to grammar rules or also as a sign of respect; still, the latter seems quite unlikely as the word itself expresses a lack of reverence. *Yökçübaşı* is a compound word composed of *yök* (CHE), *-çü* (those of), *-baş* (head of) and *-ı* (of). In Turkish grammar the afix *-çı/çi/çu/çü* determines the person who is linked to an object by work, being through its production (i.e. *ayakkabıcı*, "shoe maker"), sale (i.e. *kitapçı*, "book seller"), or milieu (i.e. *tiyatrocu*, generally "someone who works in the theatre sector", not specifically an actor, director, or other). Although at first glance the use of *-çü* in *yökçübaşı* could easily fall within the last category, it should be made clear that the choice of this suffix to indicate an affiliation is highly vague and generic and, depending on the context, it might carry a vein of mockery, disapproval, even dislike. In this case the ironic vein is confirmed by the fact that high political positions require precise (and respectful) appellations; instead, *yökçübaşı* is deliberately chosen to belittle him. The same linguistic device is used to belittle Aldıkaçtı and Akyol as *anayasacılar* (the ones of the constitution) in an example of satire analysed above.

interiors are concealed from the observer's viewpoint, nonetheless the following moment is displayed, revealing that CHE's president literally kicks students out of the building. On the ground floor, beneath the room where Doğramacı is carrying out this activity, a secretary is in charge of the pre-registration of students who obtained 301 points, as made clear on the board next to which he is standing. The cartoon captures the moment when one student has just passed through the encounter with the president and is now "flying" downstairs like others have before him, as hinted by the upside-down legs of a student who lies on the ground. As soon as he kicks him out of the window, Doğramacı looks out of the window and shouts to the secretary downstairs: "We've put in one more person. Do register 6 people (from) downstairs..."

Doğramacı's presence in this cartoon may be read on two levels since what actually happens during these meetings is not clear. One hypothesis is that he simply checks students' degrees, certificates and scores to decide their destiny (their eligibility for university) accordingly; in this case his function is merely symbolic and should be intended as a personification of CHE. A second hypothesis is that he tests students' preparation in person, therefore it is an actual exam that takes place in the upper floor of the building every time a new student reaches Doğramacı's office; in this case, the man represents a sort of "supreme examiner" to which students must unavoidably refer. In either case, the students' careers are entirely in his hands, that is to say in the hands of the Council, hence of the regime.

Indeed, the fact that the Council extended access to higher education to a broad range of students could be positive *per se*; however, two significant suggestions are made here that foreshadow a dark future. One is that the country's infrastructures destined for higher education institutions are not suitable for an increasing number of university students, as is proven by the fact that the building is so small that there is no room to accommodate the secretary, thus registrations must be arranged outside.

The second suggestion is that the decision to ease university access was not followed by a parallel concern for a standardised quality of teaching. The Council had foreseen higher education spread through the whole national territory where not only big, lively cities but also minor towns and remote areas would accommodate campuses. Certainly, the university portrayed here is meant to belong to the latter as it is located on hills in the middle of nowhere, where even the "privilege" of a paved road is denied to students and staff.[38] The

[38] It is true that *Gırgır* cartoons often skip background details, however in this case the lack of a street should not be read as marginal. On the contrary, the university is deliberately represented as isolated: according to cartoon codes, had it been located close to a town at least another building (i.e. a house, a shop, or a hospital) would have

lack of streets, as well as the absence of a bus stop and a car park give the impression that this is not a university that students would want to attend; quite the opposite, it is a remote place where in all likelihood no one would choose to go. The meaning expressed by its isolated position is that only those who achieve lower scores, that is to say those students who were given a chance by the relaxing of university access criteria, could bear to wait in a long queue, be kicked and thrown down from the third floor in order to be registered there; in other words, only the students with lower expectations, "the least successful (yet among the successful)" would be willing to graduate there.

What the cartoon finally denounces is that, promising as it might have originally seemed, the new university access system was nothing more than a lure of wider opportunities for all while actually setting a new hierarchy within academia, with a clear distinction between first- and second-class graduates depending on where they achieved their higher education. In this respect, it is however necessary to make clear that such criticism was not directed at the teaching staff, as is witnessed by the presence of satirical cartoons in which professors also emerge as victims of this reform; on the contrary, the full responsibility is here attributed to Doğramacı, who beside retaining the highest decision making power within the Council is physically present in the building and able to see the problems in person but instead of searching for solutions he is the first one who shows no respect toward the students.

That the cartoons hereby examined belong to the issues of September 1982 is no coincidence, as Doğramacı's presence in the magazine intensified that month due to the resumption of classes after the summer break. This was in fact the beginning of the first academic year framed under the supervision of the Council and cartoons about the president appeared in reaction to the coming to the surface of the problems derived by the higher education reform.

Overall, Doğramacı occupied the pages of *Gırgır* on a lesser scale than the political figures analysed above and, contrary to expectations, he was not satirised in person at the time of the foundation of the Council as much as one would expect. For instance, in the issue of December 28 1981, one week after the formation of the Council, no cartoon was dedicated to him; he was only mentioned in a short paragraph about the new Code of Higher Education that introduced a small caricature of a student asking a fellow for money in order to be able to

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been visible to prove its closeness to a centre; likewise, had it belonged to a campus a fence or at least a sign would have marked its borders.

attend a class, an allusion to the implementation of university fees that was established in the Code.

Conceivably, the reason why his appearance in the magazine did not follow his involvement in the reform of the higher education system is that Doğramacı was a notorious man even before and regardless of the Council, a condition that might have driven the *Gırgır* team to find other more efficient ways to mock the Council, as the abundance of cartoons about students in the grip of school and university problems seems to confirm. In other words, since Doğramacı was a renowned figure in the field of medicine before his appointment to the Council, he never became *the* symbol of higher education in the collective imagination in the way that Özal did for the economy, Özden did for the bankers' scandal, and Aldıkaçtı did for the 1982 constitution. This might also explain why, unlike Özal and Aldıkaçtı, Doğramacı was not caricatured on the basis of his appearance.

Another difference that comes to the surface while examining Doğramacı's presence in *Gırgır* is that while the other political figures of the regime are extensively portrayed in the magazine and satirised by written texts on a minor scale, in this case graphic and written satire appear in similar proportions. Moreover, it is exactly with written words that the bitterness is aggravated.

The peak of this trend is to be found in a column that appeared on November 21 1982 and that allegedly reports some entries taken from the personal diary of the president. The excerpt opens with the beginning of his new career as CHE president:

> "9.11.81 – Wednesday: Today is the happiest day of my life. I was elected president of the Higher Education Council. I arranged supper and invited all my professor friends to celebrate this wonderful day. I celebrated this wonderful day by transferring 57 of the 83 professors who accepted my invitation to various places."

The issue of developing higher education throughout the whole country emerges from this very first entry and is neatly taken up in the following one, which discusses the issue of infrastructures that was already detected in the caricature examined above:

"14.11.1981 – Friday:[39] In most of the places I have sent the professors there is said to be no university.[40] And is it even necessary to say that they are not present? (Let them) make them!... Is it that difficult to put two or three bricks on top of each other and build a university building? Do their hands collect pears?[41] These ones expect everything from the government, my dear."

Essentially, the fictional diary entries that appear here are supposed to reveal the true Doğramacı since they are supposedly private. The picture that emerges is of a man well aware of the power in his hands and sarcastically despotic:

"8.1.82 – Tuesday: I brought our universities to the status of complete 'Autonomy'. No one can mess with university stuff. I do whatever I want. Banish this, send away that, ooh no one interfering, no one intervening. The truth is that I have never been so 'Autonomous'."

It is also the image of a falsely naive man, who pretends not to know that a career should be built on experience and merit, and who would easily appoint acquaintances to positions of high responsibility just to show them personal gratitude:

"17.3.82 – Friday: Everybody says how right and hitting the mark the decisions that I have made are. Above all, yesterday the Dean that I have attached to a university was flying in happiness. He keeps on thanking me. You're welcome, that's nothing. People must always help each other. The man has [now] stopped being my office boy and working at "Bring me a tea, take the file, clean up the

[39] Note that November 14 1981 was not a Friday. It is however hard to state that this was a "conscious mistake" made in order to increase the humour, as it does not seem to respond to any humour code. In all likelihood it was a simple mistake, like others of this kind (writing the wrong date, day or year), which appeared from time to time in the bottom corner of the back cover where the date, issue number, editorial group, headquarters and price of *Gırgır* were displayed.

[40] The original reads *üniversite yokmuş*, where *yok* means non-existent, absent, and *-muş* (*-mış*/*-miş*/*-muş*/*-müş*) is a suffix forming dubitative mood that is frequently used while reporting something that was heard from a third party, not experienced directly. The suffix strengthens the idea that Doğramacı decided to send professors throughout the country randomly, according to no rational criteria and having no idea of the infrastructures and working environment that they would find and could set.

[41] This Turkish expression refers to people who do nothing despite seeing that around them a huge amount of work needs to be done; the interrogative form carries the meaning of an invitation to act rather than just speaking (and complaining).

place". Is it that much to make him Dean? Fine, the fact that he doesn't have an elementary school diploma may raise some problems. But it is not indispensable, hey they are not likely to ask for the "Elementary school diploma" of the great Dean. Or anyway he will enter the "Elementary school final exams" and we will create a diploma, my dear."

This entry in particular hints at the same unethical understanding of the power that a position might offer that had already emerged in the first cartoon; in the same way as the fictional Doğramacı there was keen on dismissing doctors for no reason and even wishing illnesses on people, the one who is writing here messes up private relations with public functions, promotes inadequate people to important posts and favours candidates whom he knows over suitably qualified ones.

The column also does not miss the chance to highlight the unease of the academic staff who were denied the right to work, reiterating the belief that these professors and researchers were discriminated against exclusively on the grounds of their political views, being seen as "terrorists" due to their liberal views:

"23.7.82 Monday: Oh my god! Everyone speaks of us and we don't know! I have banished from the school 150 professors and lecturers within two weeks of catching them in the act. [Those] men are nothing like professors, they are terrorists, my brother... They agreed all together and established "Cells" in the universities, which they named 'Laboratories'. I caught them in these cells while [they were] emptying a set of colourful liquids into hand-made glass tubes and pipes. I fired them and destroyed all their tactics and cells they call 'Laboratories' one by one. Ooh, now I feel relieved."

The column does not miss the chance to mock Doğramacı's obsession with British scholars as well, which went in parallel with the exclusion of local professors from university cadres. His support for them *a priori* was due not only, one could suppose, to their non-involvement in Turkish politics, but also to the mere fact that being a foreigner was a guarantee of high teaching standards:

"5.8.82 Tuesday: A set of professors is 'resigning' [instead of] following my orders. Let them do so. As if we were short of professors! English professors are renowned. After all even I have heard of professors like Prince Charles and Lady Diana[42]. I sent a request and ordered some of them, the will arrive soon.

10.8.82 Thursday: The professors I ordered from England have arrived. I found them in Sultanahmet. They all have messy hair and beards, guitars in their hands and they sing songs. They must be 'Outcast' professors.[43] I took them all to the *hamam* and had them rubbed with a *kese*[44]. They were all saying things like 'No, no, please, Help, help'. Well done, honestly, what beautiful English they speak. They are all so fluent."

Finally, the "higher education reform saga" reaches a climax with the last two excerpts from the diary, which reveal the worst of Doğramacı:

"7.11.82 Wednesday: Since I'm bored of expelling professors according to my will and wherever I want, I found a new method. Now I put all their names into a bag and draw them as if I were playing lotto. It is very funny. Tch-ch, Tch-ch, 69 first five-number row... Kars[45]... Bingoooo...

14.11.82 Monday: Today I got very bored. One of my assistants came and didn't he say 'Sir, students are in a difficult situation, they are confused about what they will do. Apparently all the laws are topsy-turvy'! What next? Oh my, are there still students left in the universities? Hey, how obstinate these guys are... I immediately ordered a new law and will get rid of the remaining ones. Since there will be no more students there will be no need for professors either. And I will

[42] In the original the two names are written as *Prens Çarlış* and *Leydis Diama*, a misspelling that besides adding fun as in the case of all misspelled names in the magazine also suggests that Doğramacı does not know English and is far from international, despite his numerous positions in international organisations. The same is true for the word "please" that is reported a few lines below and that is spelled *pliiz* in the diary.
[43] The original word in the text is *müzük*, meaning "outcast"; however, in the spoken language *müzük* could also be a mispronunciation of *müzik*, "music", which in this context would be coherent with the fact that the British professors could be music professors, as they sing songs and play the guitar. The ambiguous term *müzük* is therefore chosen on purpose. Transcribing an alleged piece of writing as if it were a spoken speech (for example in a balloon) is a recurrent device adopted in the magazine to add informality and humour.
[44] *Hamam* is the Turkish word for a Turkish bath, and a *kese* is the coarse glove used for bathing.
[45] A city in North-Eastern Turkey.

beautifully arrange the university buildings that are in my hands and turn them into "Pubs"[46]. Actually there seems to be a lot of money involved in this pub business. And if I put a colour television in it, it will become crowded. Let the money come after that... [...] Ooh, the luxury life, the luxury life..."

As far as the style is concerned, a feature that immediately strikes the attention is the high degree of simplicity and informality with which the text develops. Obviously it would be wrong to expect a formal report in the pages of a personal diary; nonetheless, the prose is simple beyond expectations, reflecting the language of a primary school student rather than that of a well-educated professional. Particularly worth noticing in this respect is the recurrence of the word *canım*, a vocative form meaning "my dear" that is often used in reproach or objection. In this text *canım* is chosen to close sentences in which Doğramacı defends himself from accusations or finds questionable solutions to situations that could earn him criticism; the fictional Doğramacı adopts this word to reassure himself and defend himself from accusations suggesting to the reader that he is more keen on convincing himself of being right at any cost than on reflecting on the complaints that he receives. In brief, *canım* conveys the image of an obstinate and somewhat childish man.

The same stubborn attitude suggested by the style clearly emerges from the content too, for in the diary Doğramacı essentially complains of receiving complaints and, impatient, he finds "cheap" solutions to crucial issues (lack of university buildings, (un)employment of teaching staff, students' doubts) that, instead, should be of utmost importance to him. His solutions basically consist of negligence and undemocratic laws that remind the reader that the destiny of higher education is now completely in his hands.

Moreover, both the style and content reveal a high level of ignorance, not only due to his poor prose and scant knowledge of English but also to his lacking basic knowledge of, for instance, natural sciences (to the extent that he is not able to recognise a chemistry laboratory) and general culture (to the extent that he believes Prince Charles and Princess Diana are scholars and does not realise that it is to be expected that British nationals speak fluent

[46] Interestingly, the word *birahane* (pub) appears in quotation marks in the original. In this case one could suppose that this is due to its being a term adopted from abroad and carrying a foreign concept that does not belong to Turkish culture; however, this is not the case of the other words in quotation marks, that are *özerk* (autonomy), *laboratuar* (laboratory), *hücreler* (cells), *istifa* (resign), *tel* (request) and *müzük* (outcast). Seemingly, the quotation marks are used when it comes to terms that are slightly more refined than common language, suggesting that Doğramacı deems them courtly while, in fact, they are not. If this hypothesis is true, we are facing yet another device that insists on Doğramacı's ignorance.

English). These features are meant to worry the reader – suggesting the terrible irony of an ignorant man being at the helm of the country's higher education system.

From a written satire perspective, then, the column skilfully mirrors the problems that emerged for real as a consequence of the reform enacted by the Council through the Code. It is true that said problems were highlighted also in cartoons and other columns, however the diary brought satire to a new, unexplored dimension. That is to say, while cartoons allow only short texts and written satire generally addresses its targets in the second or third person, or even indirectly through allusions, this text is long enough to touch on several points, and it is meant to be written by Doğramacı in person, to be private and intimate thus genuine and sincere. This allows the magazine (specifically author Süleyman Yıldız who signed the columns) to have the fictional Doğramacı make statements that potentially offer feasible (though exaggerated) explanations to political decisions in which the real Doğramacı is actually involved, and that the latter would never make in public. The diary device has him admit responsibilities that the public opinion (at least the portion of it that is constituted by the teaching staff and the general public who are not aligned with the military rule, and in all likelihood the *Gırgır* readership,) has already attributed him, in a sort of unintentional self-accusation. In sum, the satirical diary is highly intrusive as it means to access Doğramacı's mind and reveal his thoughts, in a total unmasking that appears more demystifying than ever.

As already mentioned, Doğramacı was less present in the magazine than the other figures close to the regime, and his political performance was satirised more often by portraying students than himself; nevertheless, the existing graphic and written satire on him unhesitatingly denounces a nagging, fickle and unkind man, careless about the plight of public education and determined to exploit his position for his own ends. It is perhaps exaggerated to claim that *Gırgır* had foreseen his hidden agenda; still, when one year after the end of the regime Doğramacı founded the first private university of the country, Bilkent University in Ankara, the magazine's interpretation of his interests and priorities must have echoed in the memories of some readers.

Adnan Başer Kafaoğlu

Other public figures linked to the military administration also appeared in *Gırgır*, yet sporadically when compared to the ones mentioned so far. For instance Adnan Başer

Kafaoğlu, who succeeded Özal in July 1982 as Minister of Finances, was portrayed rarely and quite "passively" compared to his predecessor.

Let us take as an example a cartoon that appeared in the issue of September 12 1982 (Fig. 31). In spite of the title, "Mexico, which has applied for IMF prescription, on the threshold of bankruptcy", which seems to suggest that the cartoon will be dedicated to the financial condition of Mexico, the protagonist is Kafaoğlu, who is standing in front of the IMF commission. An IMF member has left his seat, approached the minister and has him wear a typically Mexican outfit (a poncho and a sombrero), while reassuring him: "Don't worry my dear, we are just having a look to see if it looks good on you, esteemed Kafaoğlu...".

The cartoon refers to the IMF summit that was being held in Toronto at that time and clearly suggests that Turkey was very close to experiencing the same economic crisis as Mexico. Yet, the minister is not represented in any way that could suggest his direct responsibility for the crisis or any kind of criticism in this regard; that is to say, he is not portrayed as "giving with one hand and taking back with the other", nor as fooling the people with empty promises, nor as running away with state property. On the contrary, he seems to be powerless and forced, on the one hand, to deal with the critical economic situation left behind by his predecessors, and, on the other, to accept the conditions that the IMF will put forward. If a criticism is to be found in this cartoon it is not addressed to Kafaoğlu but rather to his predecessor, Özal, albeit indirectly, and to the unscrupulous members of the IMF, who stare at the minister menacingly like hyenas.

Collective caricatures of the political "monsters" of the regime

The depiction of characters who made their fortune under the regime, either being appointed to political positions by the junta or profiting from specific policies promoted by the military government, emerges as a crucial factor in the re-adaptation of the satirical parameters of *Gırgır*. Indeed, the fact of highlighting the negative aspects of ministers' and state officers' policy-making, their inadequacy in roles of high responsibility, their lack of concern for the common wealth, their dishonesty and eventually their hidden agendas was a common feature also before September 1980, in *Gırgır* as well as other satirical media, as this is the essence of political satire. However, the satirisation of such characters gained a new

meaning in the aftermath of the coup: since their power position was determined by and depended on the junta, by representing them this satire pointed the finger at the generals too, who were the ultimate accomplices responsible for the political and economic performance of the country during the triennium. In the impossibility of mocking the generals, the magazine hit their closest and highest collaborators, implicitly addressing them too.

That the political figures analysed so far are conceived by the *Gırgır* team as the shop window of the military rule becomes clear on the cover of the September 12 1982 issue (Fig. 32). The full page caricature shows Kastelli's repatriation, and in particular the moment when he lands in Turkey. As soon as he gets out of the plane three people run toward him, treading and stumbling on each other in the rush to ask him questions and advice. These are Doğramacı, Aldıkaçtı and Nacı Varlık, the latter being the President of the Yüksek Hakem Kurulu (Supreme Arbitration Board), the board that dictated workers' conditions by regulating collective agreements and the right to strike.

The three men appear impatient to address Kastelli, all speaking at the same time: while Aldıkaçtı asks "Give [me] some advice, old fellow! How can we make folks accept this constitution draft?", Doğramacı remarks "For goodness sake, my darling Cevher, good that you came back. Is your room in Switzerland still available? Maybe I will need it when the CHE project will come to an understanding...", and Varlık observes "What a [good] opportunity to make labourers believe that inflation will be kept at 25 % in the collective agreements". Essentially, the three men are depicted in the act of asking advice from the public figure who at the time had just proved to be one of the worst cheats in Turkey.

Moreover, the comments that they make leave no doubt as to their conscious intention of asking him for help despite his well-known lack of honesty; quite the opposite, they seem to address him precisely for his ability to persuade people to trust him, in other words to fool them. Indeed, months ahead, when Kastelli occupied the scene as a man of success, Aldıkaçtı, Doğramacı and Varlık might have wanted to genuinely consult him for advice. Nonetheless, against any hypothesis of fair intention stands the fact that Kastelli's fraud had already come to the surface at the moment when this scene is set, and it is precisely due to it that he is now being repatriated and arrested.

In other words, the three politicians are deliberately choosing him as model, showing an unequivocal inclination to act illegally and against the common will. While Aldıkaçtı's question remains open to a possible neutral reading as he simply asks for some general help, Varlık's comment clearly implies a lie to the detriment of labourers, and Doğramacı's

statement is an admission of bad intentions as he is implicitly suggesting that he has a hidden agenda and that when this is discovered he will need to leave the country and hide, as Kastelli did. The unfairness of the three is reinforced at visual level by portraying them as unrealistically short, an aesthetic device that stands as a metaphor of immoral stature, as already noticed in other cartoons. Hence, what at first glance might appear as a simple banker cartoon is in fact highlighting a similarity between Kastelli and the politicians, who are united by the same inclination toward deceit.

The date of publication of this caricature deserves particular attention insofar as it marks an exception to *Gırgır*'s tradition of satirising the events of the past week. The news of Kastelli's capture, which was officially reported on September 7, had already spread by the day this magazine was published, consequently it is in conformity with the magazine's line that several caricatures satirising his arrest were produced and included here; what is surprising, though, is that this specific caricature too is placed in this issue, anticipating the actual repatriation of two weeks later, for according to Kastelli's return to Turkey on September 28 such an illustration would have normally fit the first October cover. In all probability this cartoon was realised as a hasty reaction to the news of the capture; yet, what should the decision to publish it immediately after, thus breaking the magazine's general trend, actually be attributed to?

In the light of the fact that this issue was released on September 12, that is the anniversary of the military coup, this illustration gains a meaning that goes beyond the mere fact of Kastelli's repatriation. It is fair to claim that here the banker is assimilated to the men of power of the military era that appear with him on the scene, stressing the immoral and unethical understanding that characterises each of them in respect of their own public function; together with Doğramacı, Aldıkaçtı and Varlık, Kastelli becomes a symbol of the ruling class, thus of the political order set by the regime. In brief, on the second anniversary of the coup, the *Gırgır* team skilfully and subtly exploited the occasion of Kastelli's forced return as a pretext to call upon the regime and to summarise their view on the first two years of military rule. The result is a strong accusation, unhesitatingly displayed on the most important and visible page of the magazine: the men of power of the regime are dishonest and evil, so is the regime itself.

During the triennium this was the sole occasion in which *Gırgır*, which was always and categorically issued on a Sunday, happened to appear on the market precisely on the anniversary of the coup d'état (in 1981 the closest Sunday, hence the closest date of release, was September 13 and in 1983 it was September 11), but it would be misleading to explain

the presence of this significant cartoon solely as a coincidence. Retrospectively, 1982 may be deemed the most intense period of the regime: politically relevant events such as the foundation of the Council of Higher Education and the new constitution gradually revealed that unlike the military experience of 1971-1973 this time the armed forces had planned to retain power not simply in order to repress political fervour but to deeply reform the political system, society and institutions in a way that would survive the regime itself. In addition, the bankers' scandals and Özal's resignation highlighted the resounding cracks of a not-so-perfect ruling class. Moreover, the year marked a turning point insofar as there was an established date to return to multi-party politics and the parliamentary system. It is therefore likely that the *Gırgır* team decided to express a strong message of distrust toward the military rule in the light of these dynamics and, among all the possible covers of late 1982, they chose the one that was to be released on the week of the anniversary of the coup according to the common habit of taking stock on the occasion of anniversaries (as it is the case on New Year's Eve, perhaps even more so).

As a matter of fact, it could be objected that the same heavy condemnation of the regime could have been expressed in a number of different ways at a more general and abstract level, for instance by portraying Doğramacı, Aldıkaçtı and Varlık along with other politicians rather than with Kastelli. However, it is exactly this choice that makes this satire sophisticated, for Kastelli's presence establishes a connection between the most popular and commented on news of that week, that of his capture, and the deep meaning of the caricature. In this way, any reader at that time could feel at ease by observing an apparently familiar scene and could ultimately infer the accusation of the regime that lay beyond.

Another dynamic that should not be ignored in this respect is that Kastelli had been in the limelight for months by then, initially for his success and then for the bankruptcy scandal and subsequent escape; news regarding his financial adventure had been constantly reported and was followed by the public with relish. In brief, nearly everyone at that time was likely to be attracted by an event that involved him, even more by a scoop. Accordingly, on September 7 the news of his capture loudly resonated in the media and was discussed everywhere, throughout the week. Under these circumstances, it is fair to imagine that even someone who was not familiar with *Gırgır* and was not likely to buy it might have stopped while passing by a kiosk and noticed that Kastelli was on the cover; driven by curiosity, even the "*Gırgır* non-reader" would have ended up having a look at this image, whether they bought a copy of the magazine or not. As a consequence, it might be claimed that the presence of Kastelli in this caricature was thoughtfully planned and served the purpose of sharing *Gırgır*'s unmistakably

negative opinion of the regime with the widest possible public even beyond its usual readership, in spite of the fact that the latter was, let us recall, already very large. The decision to place this caricature on the cover rather than inside the magazine evidently responded to the same objective. Indeed, this was an outspoken example of *Gırgır*'s attitude of openly challenging the regime, a challenge that on other occasions and by other means also abandoned the boundaries of its regular readership to come to involve potentially the whole Turkish speaking civil society.

In conclusion, a seemingly simple banker cartoon unveils itself as a keen caricature of the military government and, whereas its publication on September 12 was not intentional, it is no coincidence that it was presented to the public close to the second anniversary of the coup. In other words, while the exact anniversary holds the merit of revealing the ultimate meaning of the illustration more quickly, had September 12 1982 not matched with the day of distribution of *Gırgır*, that is to say had it not been a Sunday, the cover of Kastelli's repatriation would have appeared on that week's issue all the same; likewise, had Kastelli not made the news that week, supposedly a different scene on this cover would have expressed the same judgement on the same matter. Ultimately, the value of this cover arises neither from its precise date of publication nor from the event of Kastelli's return; these are both devices that guide the reader toward its actual meaning, that is, a verdict on the military rule, where the latter is embodied by the top civil officers who sided with the junta during the regime.

A cartoon that addresses the political class in a similar way is to be found within the same *Gırgır* issue. The illustration in question (Fig. 33) differs from all the others insofar as it is not an original but the reproduction of a cartoon that appeared in a previous issue, precisely on the cover of August 1 1982. This is a rather exceptional circumstance as it must be said that it was not a habit of *Gırgır* to reprint a piece of satire that had been already published. A long caption reveals why this exception was made:

"We hit the nail on the head again!...[47]

[47] The Turkish original states *Gene 12'den vurduk!..*, from *12'den vurmak* that generally means "to hit a target" and that in this case indicates that the prediction made by *Gırgır* weeks ahead concerning Kastelli's return came true. The literal translation of the latter is "to hit on the 12" and it draws from the imagery of the game of darts, where the number twelve is positioned in the middle of the round board. The choice of this specific figure of speech here is worthy of notice for its rhetoric. The verb *vurmak* means "hit", "strike", "attack", and the direct object that it most commonly beckons is "hit", "stroke", in Turkish *darbe*; in the same way, *darbe* also means "coup d'etat". To a certain extent, even though the word *darbe* does not appear in the sentence, it is reminded to the reader in the light of the fact that the verb *vurmak* is sided by the number twelve, that corresponds to the date in which the 1980 coup (and also the previous one, on March 12, 1971) was staged.

Gırgır had announced six weeks ago that Kastelli would come back

Newspapers and the media[48] have been announcing vociferously that Kastelli was detained in Tunis and that the runaway banker will be transferred to Turkey in a few days.

If so, let it not look like praise to ourselves, but… Or let it be like praise to ourselves, come on… (in any case we are the only ones left who do not praise ourselves through our texts and images nowadays). We had scrawled that Kastelli would have surely returned to his home country 6 weeks before that.

At the moment the debate of whether Kastelli is coming from a miracle of the draft constitution or is being brought to the country by the mediation of those who seized him by the neck stays out of our subject matter… But [we were] sure that Kastelli would come to Turkey and we had intentionally drawn the event [...] weeks earlier than now, on the cover of our magazine. We are [so good at] foreseeing the future. [We are] astonished by ourselves, God..."

The cartoon is therefore introduced as dealing with Kastelli's repatriation. As it is clearly stated in the text, it is not a matter of concern of whether the banker's return is forced or spontaneous; instead, the point at stake is that Kastelli is coming back, proving that *Gırgır* has foresight about domestic politics insofar as it had predicted this event well in advance, allegedly being the first to do so.

As a matter of fact, one could wonder why the magazine dedicated a cover to the banker on August 1, when the bankers' scandal was not in the headlines anymore, though far from being forgotten. The answer becomes evident in the illustration. The scene is set at the airport where the flight that is taking Kastelli back has just landed; the cabin door has opened and passengers have started disembarking with Kastelli at the front. A feature that catches the attention is a certain degree of resemblance among all passengers, which is conveyed in three ways.

Conceivably, *Gene 12'den vurduk!..* is also an allusion to the anniversary of the coup beside being a way to stress that the *Gırgır* team had been right in its prediction; in other words, it might be the case that in addition to the meaning "We hit the nail on the head again!...", the literal translation "Again, we hit on the 12!.." suggests that "we are again on September 12" and this might be the reason for the choice of this figure of speech. It might be too speculative to elaborate on this sentence in a way that cannot be proved, and based on the two-fold meaning of a word that does not even appear in the text; it is nevertheless undeniable that another expression could have been used instead.

[48] The word used in the original is *TRT'ler*, that is a pluralization of TRT (*Türkiye Radyo Televizyon Kurumu*, Turkish Radio and Television Corporation), the national public broadcaster that at the time provided the sole television channel.

First, they are all dressed in a uniform way. Namely, they wear a suit and tie, the typical outfit that in the collective conscience identifies men as businessmen and bankers and that, here, given Kastelli's presence, suggests that they belong to the latter profession. Interestingly, however, Kastelli emerges as an exception in this respect as he is portrayed in casual clothes, which not only clashes with the style of the other characters but gains even more relevance in relation to the general trend that sees him caricaturised wearing a suit, often pinstriped.

Evidently, it would be reductive to explain Kastelli's informal dress code as a simple coincidence and, presumably, the white t-shirt and simple trousers respond to the intention to portray him entering Turkey in a state of relaxation, as if he were an ordinary citizen on his way back from a holiday, thus to show that he is extremely at ease notwithstanding the fact that he had left the country illegally and basically as a criminal. Albeit in a cryptic way, the outfit criticises the banker's low moral level hinting that he feels no remorse for his fraud.

Does this mean that the other passengers who follow him down the aircraft in their elegant suits, are, instead, honest bankers? This is a legitimate doubt rooted in the break caused by Kastelli's different dress-code, which prevents the analogy from being fully effective. It has been explained that it is the combination of a suit and tie that reveals the professional identity of the passengers, meaning that this outfit is a prerequisite for the illustration to unveil itself as a bankers' cartoon and not just as a Kastelli cartoon – as it could otherwise appear. Yet, based only on this detail the observer is unable to establish whether these characters are simply people with an important position in a financial institution or, rather, if they belong to the same "category" as Kastelli, that is to say bankers who fled the country with considerable sums of money collected from investors with the promise of high interest rates.

If the latter is true, the reason they are not dressed informally in conformity with the assumption that in this picture casual clothes symbolise the bankers' lack of sense of responsibility and consciousness toward the investors whom they have duped is presumably rooted in the lesser fame that these bankers enjoyed compared to Kastelli, that called for a clear stereotyping to mark their identity; hence the suit and tie. In other words, while Kastelli needed no introduction for he was the most notorious banker at that moment, the others necessarily had to appear in a specific outfit in order to be recognised as bankers and, consequently, to be associated with him. According to this hypothesis, the recognition of these characters as bankers, along with their presence in the same scene, moment, and action as Kastelli establish a similarity that charges them with the same crime.

As plausible as it might be, this explanation does not fully prove that these bankers are not honest and professional; nevertheless, other features resolve the question in favour of this claim. One of them is the detail that marks the second similarity, which involves two aspects of their body language. The bankers are all descending the aircraft stairs in a way that denotes a certain haste. Kastelli and the two men behind him are dashing along the runway in resolute springs while a fourth passenger has gone as far as leaping from a window and is captured while "gliding" toward the ground; a big smile on his face and a hand up in the action of greeting someone who is supposedly waiting for him at the terminal confirm that this is his way to reach the airport, hence Turkey, more quickly. It goes without saying that such hurry shows that the arrival of the four corresponds to their own will to return.

The speed with which these characters move within the scene seems unavoidably connected to the other body language detail, which relates to their facial expression. As mentioned above, Kastelli is portrayed with a relaxed face while the banker who is jumping through the window is even smiling; indeed, two expressions that connote a high degree of ease. As far as the two other passengers are concerned, then, they both have a sneer that reveals their unsavoury character and shady intentions, both further emphasised by the disproportionate size of their heads that seem to loom above their bodies as well as on the whole scene, adding to their scary look.

These expressions, though not homogeneous, reveal a high degree of self-confidence that seems to confirm bankers' dishonest nature as it warns of, first, the absence of remorse for the crime they committed and the way they fled the country; second, no fear of possible judicial measures against their past misdeeds; and, third, a threat of further bad intentions in the future, especially in the case of the two men behind Kastelli. In sum, the bankers appear to be repatriating at their own will, in a certain rush and with a resolute attitude that suggests foreboding.

At this point, a legitimate question concerns the plans of these bankers, the reason for their return; the answer seems to be enclosed in a detail that constitutes the third similarity, that is, the fact that the four bankers carry similar suitcases in their hands. It is true that *Gırgır*'s cartoons were characterised by a simple and stylised line that could eventually lead to a certain degree of standardisation in the case of images belonging to the same "category", especially as far as secondary details are concerned (for instance, street animals, students, buildings and domestic spaces were usually represented according to a standard model), and that, consequently, it could be claimed that the suitcases have no relevant role in this scene and that as such they are realised without much accuracy. To put it simply, at first glance they

could stand for businessmen's overnight bags as much as for general hand luggage that passengers normally carry on a flight, an ambiguity that in itself does not seem to conceal any hidden meaning. Nevertheless, in this context, given the identity and intentions of the four passengers, these bags cease to be simple hand luggage of general travellers, or overnight bags of ordinary bankers, but become suspect suitcases in the hands of men of doubtful intentions.

Although not clearly stated, in all likelihood these suitcases contain a large amount of money, that is to say the money stolen from savers months ahead in Turkey and "secured" by moving it illegally abroad. Besides the context, this hypothesis is hinted also through the visual choice of drawing the labels that are fastened to the cases in a way that makes them more similar to banknotes than to name tags, for whereas they should normally contain contact information about their owner they display, instead, a rough sketch of a word, possibly a surname, that cannot be clearly read,[49] creating a faded image that resembles pieces of paper money. Moreover, the fact that the bankers hold two suitcases of the same kind, one in each hand, makes this possibility even more plausible.

Overall, the similarity that involves all the pieces of luggage of the illustration, far from reflecting the stylistic simplification of a secondary detail, is intentional and rooted in the objective of drawing attention directly to these suitcases and the money they presumably contain. The suggestion is that the bankers are returning Turkey in order to make use of the money that they had previously stolen.

As it should be clear by now, nothing is left to chance in *Gırgır* and in the structure of this cartoon every similarity serves the purpose of establishing a symbolic connection between Kastelli and the other passengers, ultimately determining their identity: they are bankers, as dishonest as Kastelli, who are bringing back to Turkey the money that they illicitly stole. It is fair to claim that the four who are the protagonists of this scene embody, in fact, all of the bankers who committed this crime.

The identification of these passengers shifts the cartoons' meaning in a new direction: although the caption introduces it as dealing with Kastelli, the observer is being exposed not simply to the latter's return but to the return of (potentially) all runaway bankers, which makes of the illustration as a whole an updated version of the previously-analysed bankers' cartoons, where the latter were initially represented in the act of persuading savers to invest money in their banks, then escaping the country, and now at the moment of their return.

[49] The only exception is represented by the name of Kastelli, which is clearly visible on the luggage that he holds in his hand (in the foreground).

Given the bankers' identity, the fraud that they previously committed and their fierce attitude in this scene, it seems unlikely that their plans are to return the money to the rightful owners. So, it remains to be established what makes them so impatient to land. A hint of the event that according to the narrative could push a substantial majority of them to repatriate is hidden in the only comment that colours the scene: "Mister Orhan, all the canny ones who heard about the constitution that you prepared have come [back]", says a man standing next to the plane while staring at the arriving passengers. The reference to the constitution together with the name Orhan identifies his interlocutor as Aldıkaçtı and moves the whole cartoon to a further level that links the return of bankers with the new constitution.

Let us clarify that as a matter of fact none of the fraudulent bankers who ran away in that period really decided to spontaneously return and eventually be prosecuted. So, what is the connection between the two? What is the illustration trying to communicate? The comment addressed to Aldıkaçtı reveals that the new constitution will push the criminal bankers to break their cover and go back to Turkey, leading to the logical conclusion that somehow it will guarantee them impunity, hence protection and a relative freedom to continue with their shady dealings.

The excessive liberty that the constitution will allow these criminals once they return to Turkey is visually forewarned by the way in which the event of their return is presented in the scene. It is indeed surprising that such a crowded group of criminals is freely arriving all at once, for although the constitution is the drive it is still striking that they are returning all together, as a single group and even on the same flight. Specifically, doubts arise regarding the ease with which one criminal could book a flight, board it and get to the destination without being tracked, stopped and eventually arrested – let alone a large group of them. This "group return" seems to suggest that even though the bankers escaped the country individually and were fugitives for months, they were all hiding together or, at least, they were in touch with each other and able to plan a "collective journey back".

These circumstances lead to the conclusion that a certain indulgence existed on the part of the authorities, who were keen on allowing bankers a high degree of freedom not only at the time of escaping but also while hiding and, evidently, now that they are coming back, for common sense would have these criminals portrayed in the act of being arrested rather than landing in full liberty. The comment points to the fact that the new constitution turned such indulgence into true complicity: the bankers are making their return to Turkey because they will benefit from the protection of the constitution, hence of the institutions. The latter

are the actual targets of the satire, which also explains why Kastelli was made protagonist of this *Gırgır* cover in spite of the fact that he was not appearing on the news in that period.

In the end, the early Kastelli caricature, already turned into a bankers' and then a constitution cartoon, ultimately denounces the authors of the constitution, thus also its highest promoters, accusing them of corruption. It is a cartoon that expresses alarming concern for the future of the country.

A rich parallelism may be drawn between this caricature and the previous one. First, in both cases the reader is faced with a satirical sketch that while apparently belonging to the bankers' cartoons (and, in this case, also even being explicitly introduced as a Kastelli cartoon), turns out to be an illustration that finally denounces the political order. Indeed, in the previous illustration the reference to the political class is more explicit as the government is embodied by three of its representatives, against the single presence of Aldıkaçtı here; yet, in this case, an unmistakably political connotation is given to the cartoon by the comment in the balloon, that establishes an explicit connection between the criminal bankers and the constitution.

Second, both illustrations take advantage of the event of Kastelli's return – no matter if alleged (a spontaneous return along with the other bankers) or real (a forced repatriation) – to express a verdict on the interests and intentions of the men of the regime, thus to condemn the regime for the risks that it is exposing the country to. As already explained for the previous cartoon, Kastelli's presence establishes a connection between an ordinary and potentially extremely interesting news item and the deepest meaning of the caricature, presumably attracting a wider readership in doing so. Concerning this aspect, it should not be forgotten that this cartoon also originally appeared on a front cover, a position that validates in this case, too, the theory that *Gırgır* was not afraid to adopt any measure to make caricatures of this kind, thus its criticism of the regime, as visible as possible.

Third, in both images an association between Kastelli and the political class is evident. In the previous case the issue at stake was identified as Kastelli's and civil officers' shared inclination toward deceit; this time the authorities, on the one hand, and Kastelli and the other runaway bankers, on the other, are united by a general ease with deceit and corruption. Though similar, the combination of "dishonest bankers – dishonest politicians" carries a substantial difference in the two scenes. That is to say that while in the previous illustration Kastelli is presented as a symbol, to some extent a representative of politicians and is put at the same moral and (il)legal category as them, here he (precisely his return) becomes rather a

product, a result of their interests, mistakes, complicity and corruption. It is fair to say that since the constitution – hence Aldıkaçtı, and hence the regime – will protect criminal bankers, the degree of deceit of the former goes beyond that of the latter, it incorporates it and manifests itself on a higher scale. Here the faults and responsibilities that *Gırgır* attributes to the government emerge as greater, as they are structural and with deeper roots; yet, the regime is doubtlessly attacked with no hesitation in both cases.

Fourth, timing plays a crucial role in multiple ways. In terms of content, in both cases the reader is faced with a conjecture rather than a fact that truly occurred on those days; in addition, the said conjecture forecasts the moment of Kastelli's return long before his actual arrival, marking two exceptions in the myriad of *Gırgır* cartoons that used to refer to the events occurring during the current week. In terms of publication, then, the two cartoons mark an exception for a similar reason, that is to say the fact that besides their realisation their publication too arrived in advance, clearly reiterating the forecast as an editorial choice. In this respect, the case of the last analysed caricature emerges as a stronger exception, mainly for two reasons: one is that it illustrated Kastelli's return in advance, even larger compared to the other,[50] the second is that it was published twice. As if this were not enough, also the date of the second publication presents a substantial interval from the actual repatriation, in the light of which the explanation offered for the previous cartoon can be applied: Kastelli's capture is used to express a negative opinion on the political order and that judgement is reiterated on the anniversary of the coup to make its accusation of the regime clearer and stronger.

Fifth, it is impossible not to notice that we are facing a case of "twin cartoons", meaning that in both cases the scene portrayed is almost exactly the same. The analogy comes true not so much insofar as Kastelli is the protagonist of a political cartoon that explicitly involves the political class to ultimately criticise the latter, rather in the fact that in both cases exactly the same event, that is his return, is chosen for this purpose, whereas by that we mean the very same moment when the banker is stepping down the stairs of the plane that has just taken him back to Turkey. Furthermore, the analogy is reinforced by an identical visual composition where every element occupies the same spot, so the aircraft is on the left, visible only from one side and only in part, that is to say excluding the front, passengers are descending from the door forward and in so doing they stand on the foreground, left side, while the political figures in question stand on the right, coming from the airport terminal that

[50] Let us recall that this illustration was first published on August 1 1982.

is supposedly located in that direction; in the middle, the runway is portrayed in a very spare way, with no signage, fences, flight attendants etc. In addition, both cartoons are displayed on a cover, a similarity that is worth noting once again to stress the prominent role that the *Gırgır* team must have attributed to both at the time.

Such close similarities lead to the intuition that these illustrations are not simply "twins" but a defined narrative set where the one that appears on the cover of September 12 1982 is a continuation of the one that is proposed for the second time within the same issue and originally published on the cover of August 1 1982.

Two contrasting trends emerge if we examine the two caricatures as a continuity. While in the one that chronologically speaking was proposed to the public first the bankers are freely arriving in Turkey, in the second Kastelli is being repatriated and arrested; in fact he is leaving the plane surrounded by two men, clearly two police officers (though they do not wear uniform) who hold him by his arms to prevent his escape, in a visual language that evidently accentuates the status of prisoner. If we consider the two scenes as a continuity, Kastelli's arrest apparently suggests an encouraging ending where justice has taken its course, the criminal in question has been apprehended and is going to be detained.

Nevertheless, when focusing the analysis on politicians rather than bankers the emerging scenario is far less optimistic. Although in different forms and for different reasons in both pictures the political figures emerge as accomplices of the criminal bankers. As already argued, in the first illustration Aldıkaçtı's presence is not so noticeable since he simply stands next to the plane without saying a word. On the contrary, in the second caricature Doğramacı, Aldıkaçtı and Varlık catalyse the attention with their comments and motion, to some extent their strong presence occupies the scene overshadowing Kastelli. In the passage from the first to the second scene the politicians' attitude grows in arrogance and insolence, in terms of physical presence as well as ideas and intentions; unlike the bankers, the politicians' scope of action to the detriment of civil society has become more prejudicial with time and, according to the forecast suggested by both scenes, it will only get worse.

The different trends that involve defeated criminal bankers, on the one hand, and increasingly threatening politicians, on the other, are contrasting yet not contradictory. It can be argued that in the dialogue between the first and the second cartoon, the latter emerges as a revision of the former that reveals who personifies the actual threat to ordinary people: it is not really the bankers, who are finally subjected to law and justice, but rather the political class of the regime, which is governing the country by neglecting civil society's interests and, above all, reforming the constitution and the legal system in a way that will make themselves

exempt from judicial control. Altogether, once the bankers' threat is overcome through their arrest, it becomes clear who the most dangerous criminals are, that is to say politicians.

To conclude, the hypothesis of a high degree of continuity between these two illustrations seems highly plausible; said continuity is deliberate and carefully established through visual details as well as narrative and editorial choices. In the light of this continuity, criticism to the regime gains a stronger and wider dimension than in the single analysis of each of them: while runaway bankers cease to be a relevant political threat since the harm that they might cause emerges as being easy to overcome, hence limited, the opposite is suggested for the men of power. Considering that the deleterious choices and policies of the latter could, in theory, be prevented from above and that at a higher step in the political hierarchy lie only the generals, in the end the top chiefs of the regime are blamed for the pessimistic scenario regarding the future of Turkish politics that is presented here; the ultimate responsibility belongs to them.

Conclusions to the chapter

From the significant number of cartoons examined thus far it should have become clear that in *Gırgır* the protagonists of domestic politics were caricaturised in the 1980-83 period almost to the same extent as prior to the military coup, with the only difference being that the highest representatives of power, that is to say, the generals, were excluded from this satirical output. Indeed, this fact is not to be downplayed, for it constituted a loss for the critical power of satire. Yet, it is necessary to assess its weight in the light of what was being caricaturised (and how).

In this chapter we have seen that *Gırgır'*s ridiculing of power lost none of its verve; on the contrary, it took several forms and was developed at multiple layers hitting the major civil officers and other figures who became part of the political system promoted during the regime. The result was a broad, dynamic and lively production that revealed a rich complexity and refinement. As discussed above, it could even be the case that a character that at first reading would be recognised as the main satirical target, ended up having a secondary role in a narration that ultimately aimed at denouncing someone further up the hierarchy. Representing the closest "ally" of the generals instead of the latter themselves avoided practical problems linked to censorship; still, the final responsibilities of the circumstances

and pitfalls denounced by these political cartoons pointed at them, allowing this satire to preserve its essence.

Having assessed the effectiveness of the representation of the entourage of the junta for the purpose of criticising the military rule, the following chapter will explore the second main strategy through which *Gırgır*'s political engagement against the regime became manifest.

CHAPTER 5

SATIRICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ARMY AS OPPRESSORS

Parallel to the rich satire targeting the high rank civil officers who had become the right-hand men of the junta during the military triennium, *Gırgır* elaborated an articulated discourse about a significant aspect of the rule under of the armed forces, that is to say repression. As a matter of fact, repression was in force before September 1980 to a certain extent – in particular of the heterogeneous groups that constituted the Turkish Left. Accordingly, *Gırgır* had given the matter increasing attention during the 1970s by publishing, for instance, cartoons that hinted at the collusion between power and the Armed Right, and the prison cartoons whose mechanism was elucidated in Chapter 2. Nonetheless, the coup marked a major change in the actualisation of repression, that with the rise to power of the army became systematic, organised, and officially legitimised. *Gırgır* reacted accordingly, and thus the intensification of repression, on the one hand, and of censorship, which was indeed a major aspect of it, on the other, resulted in the elaboration of a rich satire that became extremely powerful and yet fragile at the same time. The following pages are dedicated to it.

Pre-coup low intensity civil war

On September 12, 1980, the military intervention encountered the unexpected support of the population. The military occupation of the streets and public buildings was realised smoothly, which was, as the journalist Mehmet Ali Birand rightly noted, an indication of how much society had been waiting for that moment.[1] Since the very first message pronounced by Evren and broadcast on all national radio and television channels on the day of the coup, and in the public statements that followed, the generals addressed the audience in reassuring tones, justifying their rise to power as an unavoidable decision made in the interest of the country. The message placed the armed forces on the side of the people and appealed, among other issues, to the sentiment of fear that permeated society as a consequence of the intensification of the armed conflict between extremist groups that was "taking the lives of

[1] Mehmet Ali Birand, *12 Eylül Saat 04:00* (Istanbul, 1984), 294.

about 20 citizens of ours every day"[2] and where potentially anybody could be dragged into the conflict:

> "... In the past two years terror has taken the lives of 5,241 souls and left 14,152 people wounded or disabled. The number of victims who died while serving the Turkish state in the Battle of Sakarya [during the] War of Independence amounts to 5,713, our injured [at that time were] 18,480. Even this simple comparison clearly shows that a hidden war is being carried out that does not value any human feeling.
>
> My dear Citizens;
>
> For all these and other similar reasons that all of you certainly know, the Turkish Armed Forces felt compelled to intervene in the administration of the State with the intention to safeguard the integrity of the country and nation, national justice, law and freedom, to erase fear by guaranteeing safety to individuals and property, to ensure prosperity and happiness, and to establish again and maintain the rule of law and order, in other words the authority of the State as a neutral force."[3]

Hence, the argumentation was largely built upon the bogeyman of terror and promised to make public spaces safe once again.

The low-intensity civil war that the country was experiencing on the eve of the coup and the danger of walking in the streets that the junta exploited in their public statements some days later were also very vivid in *Gırgır*. Let it suffice to mention a cartoon published in the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* section on September 14 1980 (Fig. 34): a man lies face down outside in a space that – given the width of the pavement and the distance to the first buildings in sight (which appear quite small in the background despite their height) – is presumably intended to represent a large city square. Three bullet wounds on the arm and sides of the man show that he was shot, however, no blood seeps from these wounds,

[2] From Kenan Evren's speech broadcast on all Turkish radio and television stations at 1pm on September 12 1980, in Mehmet Ali Birand, *12 Eylül Saat 04:00* (Istanbul, 1984), 294-299, 294.
[3] From Kenan Evren's speech broadcast on all Turkish radios and television at 1pm on September 12 1980, in Mehmet Ali Birand, *12 Eylül Saat 04:00* (Istanbul, 1984), 294-299, 295.

suggesting that the corpse has been lying there for a long time.[4] Considering where the scene is set, which is likely to be a main transit area for cars and pedestrians, it is certainly surprising that a corpse could gone unnoticed for hours in such a public place; in fact, what we understand from the whole scene is quite different. A pedestrian has approached the corpse, knelt down, and lifted up the motionless arm in a way that suggests he is taking his pulse; however, his exclamation – "Poor soul... It is two o'clock I'll be late for the match oh God ..." – reveals that he has actually stopped to check the time.

The message upon which the humour is built is quite straightforward, that is, that a man has no dramatic reaction upon finding a corpse in the street. What is interesting though is the level of familiarity that seems to exist between people and death, the closeness between death and daily life. The man in the caricature is neither scared, traumatised nor indignant at the sight of the corpse; on the contrary, he is willing to come close to it, even to touch it without fear. What is more, the dead body itself does not seem to have any special meaning for the man, who simply replaces the act of asking the time of a passer-by with the act of checking for himself the time from the watch of a dead pedestrian who can no longer reply for himself.

The beginning of the exclamation strengthens the meaning of the caricature as it normalises the presence of the corpse even further. The expression "Poor soul...", *vay canına* in the original, makes clear that the passer-by is not unaware that the man is dead; yet, it takes only a few seconds (indicated by the ellipsis) for him to divert his attention to the time and the beginning of the match. In the end, nothing suggests that the man will notify the police of the presence of the corpse, let alone wait for their arrival; we understand he will continue on his way apace in order not to miss the beginning of the match. Here, the match remains his priority not necessarily because it is more important; rather, because as an event it is more exceptional.

[4] An objection to this interpretation could be that if the author of this illustration was an amateur, the blood might have been omitted accidentally, rather than on purpose, due to his inexperience. However, it should not be forgotten that the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* were always subject to revision before publication, and sometimes *Gırgır*'s professional cartoonists reserved themselves the right to make some revisions to the illustrations instead of expecting them from the actual artists; this happened in order to reduce the time span between the first submission of a cartoon to the headquarters of the magazine and its publication, especially in the case of amateurs who were not in Istanbul and thus had no other option but correspondence by mail, which certainly reduced the time for communication and amendments. In the comment published along with this caricature (that comes from Kayseri), the *Gırgır* staff states that the weakness of its original version was in the face of the dead man and that for this reason the *Gırgır* team slightly modified it. No mention is made of a possible lack of blood, the ambiguity concerning the wounds, or changes that should be made to them, suggesting that they are depicted as dry on purpose, hence the only meaning that the reader should derive from it is that the corpse has been lying there for a long time.

Ultimately, the illustration makes the viewer wonder how many people may have reacted to death with the same indifference. Given that the corpse appears to have lain unattended for quite some time, the answer is likely to be many.

This was the situation of civil order as of September 1980. Since political violence had reached such a peak that death in the streets was "normalised", it is not surprising that a great part of the nation was ready to renounce the democratic parliamentary system against the junta's promise to guarantee freedom, safety and justice. For, translated into the practice of daily life, this meant that the military would safeguard the streets and allow people to walk without fear, to go about their daily business and not to worry constantly about their children when they left home for school. Indeed, in its first weeks in power the regime achieved extraordinary outcomes in the fight against terrorism: 160,000 weapons were collected after a call to the population to hand them over, those responsible for several political murders were found, and the organisations that had fuelled the armed conflict throughout the country were defeated, including the major ones.

What was not clear in those first days of military rule, however, was that the junta's self-proclaimed role as defenders of order was built upon a simplistic dichotomy that put forward a general idea of *çalışkan, vatanperver, temiz Türk* (hardworking, patriotic, virtuous Turk) against a single encompassing superficial definition of *anarşist* (anarchist), *terörist* (terrorist) and *bölücü* (divider), where the former essentially stood for whoever manifested no interest in politics, while the latter could potentially include anyone, not necessarily people involved in violent and illegal political organisations. Accordingly, as a first step to assure a *huzur ve güven ortamı*, an environment of trust and peace of mind, as the armed forces called their period in power, the regime compiled a list of people to be secretly monitored based on their suspected political connections. Surveillance was usually followed by repeated arrests and investigations that could lead to endless detentions without trial. The notion of anarchist, terrorist and divider was so vague that in most of the cases the detainees were not political militants; they were, more frequently, intellectuals, professionals, artists and students who were arbitrarily suspected of carrying out political activities at various levels.

Mass imprisonment

Under the regime Turkey became acquainted with a new phenomenon, that of mass imprisonment. Despite the fact that the arrest of political extremists, murderers and terrorists had been accomplished by the end of September 1980, thousands of people continued to be arrested throughout the country during the whole triennium. The increasing figures are striking. According to official data, in the first three weeks of military rule, 2,379 people were arrested in nineteen provinces, at the end of the second month of regime their number had risen to 7,945, and by the end of the year, nearly 30,000 people found themselves in prison. A year later 122,600 people were under arrest and on the second anniversary of the coup 77,295 were still in prison, with more than one third awaiting trial. In total, nearly 178,000 people were taken into custody, about 64,000 were detained and 42,000 were sentenced to imprisonment.[5] The statistics in the hands of Turkey's Human Rights Association, on the other hand, show that the phenomenon was much vaster: according to its reports, during the triennium 650,000 people were arrested, 210,000 were fined, 230,000 were tried and a total of 1.683 million were listed in police files as "suspects".[6]

Implementation of prison buildings

A concern that immediately emerged as a result was that the existing penitentiary institutions were not prepared to house so many detainees. In order to face this new situation all military barracks were temporarily converted into prisons; the Selimiye Barracks in Istanbul, for example, became the biggest in the city. At the same time, the creation of new prisons was ordered across Turkish soil, as witnessed today by the penitentiary in the South-Eastern city of Diyarbakır, to mention the most infamous example, which stands as a vivid memory of the repressive will of that time. The disproportion between the overall number of cells and detainees, which demanded the building of not one but several new prisons in a country that, despite all, was already familiar with political arrests, marked an unprecedented tenacity on the part of the regime that *Gırgır* did not miss the chance to satirise.

[5] Cf. Various Artists, *Cumhuriyet Ansiklopedisi 1923-2000* (Istanbul, 2002), Vol. 3, 534 and Vol. 4, 60, Clement Henry Dodd, *The Crisis of Turkish Democracy* (Huntingdon, 1990) 53, and Mehmet Ali Birand, *12 Eylül Saat 04:00* (Istanbul, 1984), 320.
[6] Various Artists, *Cumhuriyet Ansiklopedisi 1923-2000* (Istanbul, 2002), Vol. 4, 12, quoting statistics released by İHD.

The building of new prisons itself became a subject of humour. An amateur cartoon made in the Metris prison (Istanbul) and published in the magazine on November 7 1982 (Fig. 35) portrays Minister of Justice Cevdet Menteş[7] listing his accomplishments in front of microphones and television cameras and proudly declaring that "The construction of ten prisons has come to an end. And as many are under construction...".[8] The joke here lies not in the announcement itself, nor in a particular physical feature of Menteş (although his head is evidently bigger than the rest of the body), but in the way the news is introduced, that is "Turkey's housing issue is being solved".

This title refers to the problem of housing the swelling number of people who were settling in urban areas every year. The housing matter affected in particular the seasonal workers who migrated from their villages to cities at the beginning of the winter season with the illusion of better working conditions and lifestyles, to then join their families again in the summer. These workers were usually young men who moved to the towns alone or with other male relatives or friends and who were referred to as *bekâr*, bachelors, a definition that evoked a negative connotation basically related to the fact there was no woman by their side. These workers were perceived to be unable to look after themselves and their living spaces properly, a prejudice that complicated their search for accommodation; so, those who could not find a place in the *bekâr odaları*, rooms for the *bekâr*, had a hard time persuading wary landlords and landladies to take them in.

Several comics made fun of the situation of these unfortunate workers in those years, such as a strip, which became quite popular at the time, where a seasonal worker is portrayed as facing rejection in every circumstance of his new city life. When looking for a job, the employer shouts at him "I don't give jobs to a *bekâr*"; likewise, a landlord asserts "I don't give [my] house to a *bekâr*"; and, finally, the father of his beloved states "I don't give [my] daughter to a *bekâr*", leaving him downhearted. In sum, housing was a concrete issue that was debated at that time.

In the Menteş cartoon, a connection is established between prisons and houses based on the problem of overcrowding. This *fil rouge* highlights the stark contrast between freedom

[7] I choose to mention this illustration here rather than in the chapter dedicated to the caricaturisation of the political figures who decide the country's fate with the junta because this cartoon deals with the issue of arrests and is realised by an amateur cartoonist in jail, I thus find it more appropriate to include it in the analysis of matters overtly related to repression rather that to general decision-making. This cartoon is particularly interesting also because it is a rare example of a portrait of a politician in the illustrations of the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler*, that generally speaking were more keen on making satire by representing common people.
[8] The comma between the word "ten" and the rest of the sentence in the original "On, cezaevinin yapımı bitti. Bir okadarda yapım halinde..." is in all likelihood a typing error as its presence there does not make sense.

and confinement and opens the floor to two interpretations. One is that the harsh living conditions of seasonal workers, who are pushed toward the cities by the job market – probably against their own will, could be compared to the captivity of political prisoners; all the more so given that the profile of the workers and prisoners is similar as they are largely single young men.[9] This meaning, however, is perhaps too pretentious to be attributed to an early stage cartoonist. The other, more plausible, interpretation is that arrests are so frequent that people may find themselves in prison with the same likelihood with which they do the most normal things such as looking for a place to live.

Prison domestication

The comparison between prisons and homes that emerged in this caricature as a collateral aspect of the phenomenon of new prison buildings appeared in other illustrations as a satirical subject itself. In a comic strip sent from Istanbul's Metris prison and published in the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page on January 16 1983 (Fig. 36), a young man is being denied the opportunity to rent a house because he is a *bekâr*. Judging from his appearance and outfit he seems more likely to be a university student than a seasonal worker, yet, the negative prejudice linked to his unmarried status, that is to say being unable to keep his living space in good order, remains. The resigned expression on the young man's face suggests that he has already experienced several such rejections and has run out of options. In the second scene, then, the same character is sitting in a prison cell in the same position as in the previous one and is saying to a little mouse next to him that "Ah just like that, in the end I, too, could find a hole to creep into...".

So, the young man was arrested and finds himself in prison for no specific reason; for, according to the narrative sequence, we do not see him committing any crime. Likewise, we do not see him taking part in any political activities either. The lack of any hint as to why he has been detained, together with his innocent look, suggests that his arrest was arbitrary and unjust. This is the first accusation that the illustration directs at the regime.

Furthermore, it appears that the young man feels quite lucky to have found somewhere to live – finally – and, although we could assume his dissatisfaction with this particular solution, he nonetheless accepts it. In other words, there is a sense of resignation about his

[9] Given that there were many more men's than women's prisons, this proportion was reflected also in the content of cartoons dedicated to prison life, where male prisoners are portrayed in the overwhelming majority.

fate that denotes how normalised arbitrary arrests and repression in general have become under the regime.

Finally, the prison itself is evidently in a bad condition, with no other furniture than a stool, ruined walls, and a spider web in one corner. The young man perceives his cell as a mouse's hole, and the comparison is strengthened by the presence of a little mouse. So, leaving aside the legitimacy of his detention, serious concerns are raised regarding the living conditions that prisoners are forced to endure. This denunciation becomes even stronger in the light of the fact that Metris was precisely one of those prisons that opened in the aftermath of the coup (in this case, on April 17 1981) in order to handle the mass arrests: less than two years later, the conditions of its cells already appear decrepit, raising doubts about the commitment to ensure decent conditions for prisoners at the time of planning and building the prison.

By insisting on the fact that a prison had become a synonym for a house, these cartoons reproduced realistic situations that highlighted the frequency, ease and arbitrariness with which civil society was subject to arrests. This criticism was furthered in some cases by making recourse to the absurd. In a cartoon published on January 30 1983 (Fig. 37), a handcuffed man accompanied by a soldier has reached the entrance of a prison where a guard has come to "welcome" him. The building is visibly overcrowded, to the extent that not only are the windows packed with detainees but the external walls too appear bursting under the pressure of the inmates.

A singular detail that catches the attention is the attitude of the soldier that has escorted the new detainee to the prison, who is standing just behind the latter and appears quite relaxed, despite the fact that he is in charge of a new prisoner who has yet to cross the threshold of the prison and hence might try to escape. For example, he does not hold him by his arm as one might expect, and in fact he does not even seem to be looking at him.[10] The reason for such behaviour becomes clear upon reading the words that the captive says angrily to the prison guard: "Mate, what do you mean 'we are full'? I phoned and reserved a place three months ago...". The reason for the soldier's relaxed attitude is, therefore, that the risk that the new prisoner will run away is absolutely nil as, conversely, it emerges that he actually wants to be there.

[10] Indeed, his eyes seem to be closed. It is true that he holds a rifle in his hands and, furthermore, the prison building is part of a larger complex surrounded by watchtowers and a barbed wire fence; all the same, the soldier's attitude appears quite relaxed.

Satire in this cartoon is articulated along several levels of the absurd. The first, evidently, is that the protagonist of the cartoon finds himself at the door of a prison according to his own will and wants to be allowed inside. The second is that this situation is not happening by chance, for the prisoner claims that he planned it in advance and made all necessary steps to make it happen, meaning that he attached a certain importance to the "opportunity" to be there. The third is that once on the threshold of the prison, the man insists on being allowed inside despite the wretched living conditions he would have to face and that he can now partially observe (if he was unaware before) by simply looking at the building, in particular the crowded windows.

Last, but not least, the man is upset that there is no space for him in the building, especially given that he had booked his place in advance. Having been let down in this way makes the prisoner the victim of an injustice and here lies the ultimate paradox on which this cartoon is built: not going to prison is perceived as the injustice, instead of the opposite.

The presence of handcuffs further stresses the paradox. Handcuffs are the only element represented in a way that corresponds to reality. While the soldier is alienated from the situation, the newly arrested man claims his right to be imprisoned, and the prison guard denies him that right, the handcuffs on the wrists of the detainee stand for what they realistically are: an instrument to limit someone's freedom and to exert physical and psychological control over them. So, while the presence of handcuffs apparently clashes with the fact that the man is voluntarily going to prison, their function in this context is that of a warning, a last reminder of the power roles and hierarchies that are in force inside that building, not only as a space that circumscribes freedom of action but also as a place regulated by the state. Despite that, the man does not renounce his desire to become a part of it.[11]

In this cartoon the notion of prison as a place that ordinary people are familiar with is as removed far as possible from reality. In other words, the more traumatic prison is the more it is idealised as a destination where one would willingly go. In particular, the fact that the protagonist mentions the opportunity to book in advance is a decisive detail that equates the prison to a holiday resort, hence a pleasant place to enjoy a break from routine.

[11] To clarify, the exact time (three months) is treated in this analysis as a purely random time span. There is a possibility that in the intentions of the authors the detainee refers to some illegal action that he committed three months earlier and that caused his arrest once that his responsibility was found out; however, this hypothesis is quite remote as the impossibility of the reader to find out what happened back then would leave the cartoon incomplete. Moreover, the sequence of making a phone call and reserving a place, especially the act of calling, leaves little room for this interpretation. In any case, this hypothesis would not change the satirical potential of this cartoon to a great extent, as the second, third and fourth levels of absurdity would remain valid.

If this were not enough, judging from the hoard of people inside the building prison has become a popular destination, so much so that early reservations have ceased to be in effect, to be replaced by a "first come first served" policy. A holiday, however, implies a transitory situation in which holidaymakers reach a destination of their own choice, planning the length of their stay and remaining according to their own desire, and where perhaps they might return again in the future. On this point the idyllic illusion crashes against reality: detainees are not customers and the rules and conditions in force are those of the state, exercised through its organs like the police and the judiciary that decide whom to "award" the "prison privilege" to, for how long and how many times.[12] Possibly, this could also be the ultimate reason why the prison guard reserves the right to deny access to this prisoner who has arrived with the attitude of a paying customer. In the end, willing to be detained or not, even when the will of citizens seems to match that of the state, the final unpredictable decision remains in the hands of the latter.

In brief, during the regime detention became an experience with which nearly everyone in Turkey was familiar, either personally or through the experiences of relatives and friends. The degree of familiarity with imprisonment across society is compared in *Gırgır* to that which can be established with one's own house or holiday accommodation, that is to say a place where tranquillity is sought, either permanently or temporarily. The "desirability" of detention stresses the paradox of the domestication of the prison cell that transposes the mere idea of a place to (be forced to) spend time to even evoke a "homely" feeling, and strengthens the criticism of that domestication along with it.

The moment of mass arrest

The illustrations analysed so far have a singular aspect in common, which is that criticism about the arrest of a multitude of people is conveyed through satirical sketches based around a single protagonist. In other words, it is through the statements of one character (the minister of justice, the young student, the man who has booked his stay in prison) who appears on the scene alone or is accompanied by only a few others that large-scale

[12] Let us do not forget that a first experience in jail did not automatically exclude further arrests once a prisoner was released, independently of the length of the first detention.

imprisonment is denounced.[13] Other cartoons, conversely, portray the phenomenon *tel qu'il est*.

This is the case, for instance, of a comic strip published on September 4 1983 (Fig. 38). The first scene presents about fifteen men trying to get on a vehicle that is clearly too small to accommodate them all, and an incredulous and angry guard who complains to the driver: "Hey, what's this situation? How [do you think] you [will] squeeze 45 passengers into the vehicle?" In the second scene the reader is now able to see a sign on the side of the vehicle that was previously concealed by the crowd, which reads "prison vehicle", and the same guard exclaims "Oh gosh, I thought it was a minibus..."

The humour is based upon a simple representation of the surroundings and similar depiction of the guard's uniform; that is to say, given the absence of signs, objects and buildings in the background, at first glance it is not clear whether the scene takes place at a bus stop, bus terminal, car park, or some other setting. The lack of clues makes the reader dependent on the only existing information, that is to say the comment made by the guard, that plunges the former into the latter's perception of what is happening. So, the readers are led to believe that the vehicle is a bus, hence to recognise in the guard's vaguely drawn uniform that of a traffic policeman. Then, the surprise comes when the reader understands that their assumption regarding the vehicle (along with that of the guard) was wrong; above all, together with the surprise comes disorientation, caused by the logic of the guard's second comment. Let us analyse this logic step by step.

At very first glance, before reading and trying to interpret the context and the intentionally small representation of the bus, it is already clear that the men who appear in the first scene will not all fit in the vehicle. As stated above, nearly fifteen men can be counted in this confused group that arrives on the scene from one side and extends beyond the image; hence, when the guard's words announce that thirty more are waiting it becomes clear that the majority of them will not be able to find a space on the bus. Facing this crowd the guard suspects that the driver will violate safety precautions and let an excessive number of passengers into his vehicle, according to a practice that was (and still is) quite common in Turkey's public transport; he thus tries to prevent such a violation through his rebuke, whose

[13] Actually, in the illustration that was just analysed overcrowding in the prison building is obvious but the cartoon does not focus on the practice of mass arrests, the bodies of the crammed prisoners rather serve the purpose of justifying the words "we are full" that we understand the prison guard to have said.

function is to assert his presence and remind the driver that he, as a representative of authority, is presiding over the scene.

Despite that, all the passengers are accommodated on the bus. Any hypothesis that an extra vehicle has arrived or that some of the men have given up the endeavour is refuted by the fact that the bus is now so crowded that passengers are pressed against the windows and sunlight is prevented from shining into the interior. The reader is able to grasp that the men are packed against each other from the sight of many eyes extremely close to each other that appear behind the window in a way that recalls the prisoners of the previous illustration, and from a glance at the dark interior visible through the side door.

Order is completely reversed when the destination of the bus becomes clear. The guard does not perceive himself on a higher step in the socio-political hierarchy of power than the bus driver anymore, since the latter ceases to be deemed a mere driver to become a state employer who carries out a similar function and shares the same goal; that is, according to the guard, the safeguard of order and removal of danger from public spaces. Actually the reader has no opportunity to find out whether these prisoners represent a real "danger", nor has the guard; however, while the former could suppose from the men's appearance and expressions that they are ordinary citizens rather than criminals or terrorists, the latter has already established that they are guilty of something.

To put it simply, based on the same (lack of) information, the former advances a hypothesis, aware that it might prove wrong, while the latter arrogantly takes the opposite for granted. Here a rift between the reader and the guard develops: the former, who was initially "assisted" by the latter in clarifying the situation, is now floored by his logic and prejudice, and having by now understood the identity of each character and group of characters decides to distance himself from the guard's perception to evaluate the situation independently.

The stigmatisation of the prisoners by the guard is clear and emerges from his transformed attitude in the second scene, in which his safety concerns suddenly dissolve as he withdraws his objection to let the vehicle leave. Here the guard shows that he understands the status of detainee as being lower than that of free citizens in terms of rights and dignity, for according to him it is acceptable to pack prisoners into an unmistakably small space and let them travel in such uncomfortable, unsafe conditions. Moreover, this means that in case of an accident on their route to the prison building the risk of being injured or killed is higher than it would if safety rules were respected; but this, for the guard, is perfectly fine.

In the second scene, and specifically in this respect, tacit complicity is established between the guard and the driver as neither of the two takes the initiative to improve the travel

conditions of these passengers, nor expresses any compassion, proving that according to both the life of a prisoner is worth less than that of a free citizen. In the end, the guard in his uniform and the driver employed in the prison system are both representatives of the hard line of the authority against detainees. So, the treatment reserved to these passengers before reaching the detention centre paves the way for readers' considerations and concerns – instead of approval, which would have arisen in case the same vision and perception as the guard was maintained – regarding their conditions once in jail.

An interesting feature of this cartoon brings us back to the phenomenon of mass imprisonment itself, which is that even when the satirical elements and message are disclosed, it remains unclear whether the guard is a prison guard or a traffic policeman. Although we are dealing with detainees, the first hypothesis does not seem feasible insofar as it is assumed that a prison guard who controls a group of prisoners who are being transferred from one jail (or block) to another should be aware of the nature of the minibus and identity of its passengers. If the second hypothesis is true, then, how is it that a crowd of detainees is getting on the vehicle without being supervised by any police or military representative?

The comments made by the guard prove that he is stranger to what is taking place around the prison vehicle, meaning that he might be a traffic policeman who witnesses the scene by chance, say because at that precise moment he happens to be in the street where the minibus is awaiting the prisoners. Besides him and the driver, who are in an intermediate position between the authorities allowed to exercise power over the prisoners and people not involved in the action (like, for example, pedestrians who could potentially pass by the group of men and simply watch them board the prison bus, with no power over the situation), no one is escorting the detainees to prison, or at least to the vehicle; nevertheless, the men do not attempt to escape. The reader realises at this point that, absurd as the idea might sound, it might be the case that the detainees are going to prison voluntarily, according to their own will.

This is plausible since, first, they do not require close control; furthermore, they look impatient to get on the vehicle, milling around at the side door like passengers afraid of missing the ride rather than patiently waiting in a queue; and, finally, some of them stare at the guard with rage and disapproval as if his warning words represented an obstacle to their transfer.

Evidently, it is hard to believe that someone might have wished to be detained and worked toward the accomplishment of this goal intentionally; yet, this image is not unrealistic *tout court*. It is, rather, an exaggerated representation of a practice that was followed for real,

that is the call to give up. For example, during its building, the already-mentioned prison of Diyarbakır was officially presented as a military school where prisoners would be subject to military training. An ex-detainee recalls that one day a notice was announced according to which registrations were open for those wishing to enrol at this "boarding school", which was described as a space equipped with facilities including a cinema, baths, library, dining rooms, and dormitories with private toilets. Genuinely believing this description and invitation, some people "enrolled" in the penitentiary, entering a nightmare overnight.[14]

There were, therefore, cases of people who entered prison voluntarily, and to whom it did not take long to eventually understand that prison life was not as promised by the authorities, above all concerning living standards and the protection of basic rights. Likewise, it will take just a few seconds for the detainees who have spontaneously chosen prison in this comic strip to have a foretaste of the conditions reserved for them, just the time it takes to close the side door of the overcrowded prison bus and start the journey, by which time it will be too late to demand freedom.

Overall, this comic strip offers a glance into one of the earliest steps of mass imprisonment, that is, the moment when a large group of detainees is arrested together. Ill-treatment is so manifestly tolerated already at this stage in the guard and driver's behaviour that the illustration ends up denouncing large scale imprisonment and prisoners' conditions equally, and, through both, the transformation of the relation between the state and its citizens into one between power and victims.

Prison overcrowding

Having witnessed mass arrest, it is legitimate to wonder whether once they reached the penitentiary institution detainees will be able to enjoy a more comfortable space or if the level of crowdedness will mirror the one experienced on the way to jail. A set of cartoons leans toward the latter.

This is the case, for instance, of an illustration published on January 16 1983 (Fig. 39), which portrays a leisure break, that is, a time during the day when detainees are allowed out of their narrow cells in order to walk back and forth and get some fresh air. The walk, which

[14] Cf. the testimony of Paşa Uzun and Abdurrahman Ecer, interviewed in the documentary movie *5 No'lu Cezaevi: 1980-1984*, directed by Çayan Demirel, produced by Ayşe Çetinbaş, photography by Koray Kesik, editing by Burak Dal, music by Ahmet Tirgil, Nizamettin Arıç, Serdar Can, 2009, Surela Film, Istanbul. Daily life in jail and its darkest side will be treated below in this chapter.

should normally take place in the inner courtyard of the prison building where several detainees (those of a cell, a dormitory, or a block) are brought together for a specific timespan, is presented in this cartoon in a fairly singular way. The focus is on the threshold of the prison building that the plaque "closed prison" reveals as its main entrance. One detainee is taking some steps outside, into the street, while a guard holds him by a rope wound around his chest and states "Ok, your walk is over. Hey you, Remzi the life sentenced! ... come [back] and [let] Hamza walk a bit.". Behind the guard, a considerable number of prisoners mingle at the entrance observing the scene and impatiently waiting their turn. The distance covered by the prisoner is extremely short, to the extent that even he, who might have already learnt that mistreatment is a constant of prison life, turns to look at the guard incredulously that his right to walk is being limited to these two, or maximum three, paces back and forth.

The first evident paradox of this scene lies in the place where the detainee is walking. Closed prisons, as detention centres that accommodate prisoners whose interaction with society is deemed dangerous, are equipped with strong security measures in order to prevent, or at least minimise the risk of escape, and where, predictably, in no way are the inmates allowed to approach the doors that lead to freedom. It is therefore puzzling and humorous that a detainee is allowed to cross the threshold under the eyes of a guard, even with his consent.

The second element that generates humour is the look of the prisoner, whose profile seems to match that of an ordinary person who has no reason for being in jail. Significantly, he holds a *tespih* (prayer beads) that he lets rotate under his fingers, bead after bead, in the typical movement that is carried on while silently praying. The man is thus praying while walking and the *tespih* stands as the visual symbol of his pious, hence good – hence innocent – nature, that definitely marks a sharp contrast with his surroundings. This contrast would probably also be noticeable had the scene been set in an open prison, yet the surprise that it creates in relation to being a closed one is considerable as his appearance is far from that of a man whose escape suggests a danger to public security.

If he is not a public enemy, then, why is he detained in a closed prison? The only possible answer seems to be linked to mass imprisonment. In particular, facing the huge waves of arrests and lack of an adequate number of prison buildings, the only way to house the growing prison population is to place them in one penitentiary rather than another based on the "population rate" in each of them, regardless of the type of prison and its suitability for the nature of the detainee.

The most striking feature of this scene is the attitude of the guard toward the prisoner. The former exerts full control over the latter not only by giving orders as is allowed by his

role in the prison hierarchy (for it goes without saying that even the lowest rank of prison guard has the right to exercise power over detainees), his "superiority" is manifested also in strong physical terms through the presence of the rope, which inevitably evokes a dog lead. The rope downgrades the prisoner to an animal that makes him entirely dependent on the guard's will, a dependence that would certainly exist even without the rope but to whom the latter adds an element of humiliation. In brief, the prisoner could have been, say, handcuffed and guided through those few steps, instead he is treated like a dog at the mercy of its owner.

The rope, with its heavy presence, is the most evident anomaly of the scene but not the only one. While its presence, in fact, can be understood as a tool for humiliation, two more details raise questions, namely the decision to let prisoners walk outside the prison perimeter and the extremely short distance that they are allowed to cover.

The only obvious reason for the first seems to be that the number of prisoners accommodated in this prison is much higher than the building was designed for, to the extent that even common areas like corridors and inner yards are completely crowded with detainees; consequently, the only possibility to find room for them to stretch their legs is by leaving the prison.

Still, and even more so in the light of that, why grant them only a few steps? Given that preventive measures exist to reduce the risk of escape (i.e. handcuffs or even a rope, as suggested in this illustration), why not to let them cover a longer distance? After all, this does not necessarily imply that they would get away from the prison, as they could also be allowed to walk along the building's walls.

An element of sadism is certainly at play in this prisoner-detainee power play. But, ultimately, the fact that two or three steps are deemed adequate to stretch the legs stands for the fact that within the prison area space has become so scarce that even walking a few steps in a row is unimaginable, hence they have become a "luxury" with which prisoners are forced to be content. In other words, the lack of space inside is suggested by the slightly more favourable conditions granted to prisoners outside. Altogether, more vehemently than the humiliation to which single prisoners are subjected by the guards, the caricature denounces the inhumane living conditions in general that detainees as a whole are forced to endure as a result of mass imprisonments.

The cartoons analysed so far stand as a representative sample also in terms of the time of production and publication. An interesting pattern emerges in this respect, that is, that satire that denounces the issue of mass imprisonment was a constant in *Gırgır* throughout the

whole period of military rule, as is testified by the cartoons dated as late as September and – as we will see later in this chapter – November 1983. Between September 1980 and November 1983 no change of narrative trends is recorded in the satire dealing with arrests on a large scale, nor in that regarding the overcrowding of the prisons.

This constant mirrors the fact that these two phenomena remained a prominent aspect of the regime until the very end, two negative records that evidently for the military never came to constitute a pitfall to improve. In fact, as many witnesses have since revealed, prisons remained so crowded until the end of the triennium (and beyond) that they came to be perceived as cities within cities. They had become concentrations of people whose existence there proved that neither the persecution (and blurred definition) of political prisoners ceased after the defeat of terrorist organisations, nor the conditions of the thousands who spent years in prison without any proof of wrongdoing (in many cases they were just awaiting trial) ever became a concern. In the end, the disproportionate extent of persecutions was proved by the fact that prison overcrowding always remained an issue at stake, despite the fact that the building of new jails was a constant phenomenon of the three years.

To sum up, it emerged in the previous pages that the normalisation of detention and its application on a large scale were tackled in *Gırgır* through a variety of cartoons dedicated to its different aspects and phases. Among those touched on in the magazine, the implementation of prison buildings, the moment of the arrest and transit to the prisons, the arrival at the prison door, the "walking" breaks and a fragment of cell life were examined as examples. Having assessed the presence of mass imprisonment as a phenomenon in the cartoons and the trauma that it caused, it is now time to ask ourselves who these prisoners were.

The identity of prisoners

As it was explained earlier in this chapter, and as it clearly emerges from the impressive number of arrests, the waves of persecutions enacted by the regime were not limited to the members of extremist organisations. While these were routed out immediately at the dawn of the triennium, in fact, the depoliticising mission of the military was perpetrated until the end of their period in power especially to the detriment of sympathisers of the Left and, on a lesser scale, among supporters of Islamist views.

Those arrested were men and women of any age, or socio-economic background and belonging to the most disparate cultural milieu, among them journalists, lawyers, teachers, professors, unionists, artists, students and labourers. Persecutions triggered a wave of migration toward European countries too, where an impressive number of citizens of Turkey sought asylum as political refugees and started over a new life, accepting also the most menial jobs in order to escape the iron hand of the junta. However, while 30,000 people managed to flee the country, 348,000 were banned from travelling abroad[15] and for them, like those who remained, repression – in its most evident manifestation, detention, but not only – became a nightmare to be perpetually confronted in daily life.

The identity of the victims of mass imprisonments is an issue on which *Gırgır* insists in several cartoons. Three major currents can be detected that stress the nature and profession of the inmates, along with their non-involvement in political extremism, namely the one dedicated to labour unionists, another focused on artists and intellectuals, and a third centred on ordinary people.

Labour unionists

A representative of the first current is a cartoon that appeared in the magazine on January 4 1981 (Fig. 40). Before observing the picture, attention is drawn by a caption that essentially introduces it as a "mafia cartoon" as it is titled: "mafia chiefs accused of dealing contraband foreign money, cigarettes and weapons were set free". The observer is then faced with a view of a prison corridor where the door of a cell stands in the middle half open while several characters move in front of it; on the right, two handcuffed men are being led toward the cell by an annoyed guard, and on the left, three men are walking away in the opposite direction while a second prison officer is guarding the door.

The illustration is striking for the harmony of its composition. This lies in the symmetrical disposal of its characters in relation to the cell door, which marks a physical, behavioural and emotional division among them. Three are on its right and four on its left (whereas nobody stands, for instance, in the middle, on its threshold);[16] the ones on the right

[15] İsmet G. İmset, "The PKK: Terrorists or Freedom Fighters?" *International Journal of Kurdish Studies* Vol. 10, No. 1/2, (1996): 60.

[16] Let us clarify that one of the men on the left is almost completely out of the frame as only his head appears in the foreground while he is abandoning the scene together with the other two. This is to say that the presence of one more person here than on the right of the door does not affect the visual balance between the two sides.

are getting closer while those on the left further; the former look serious, worried and resigned while the latter smile embarrassedly.

At first glance the scene appears cryptic as it is fairly hard to interpret so much dynamism around a prison cell; then, the words in the balloon clarify the situation since the guard on the left says, while staring at the three men next to him: "If you stay in prison any longer you'll corrupt the morality of DİSK administrators. Get going, outside.." It is so understood that the handcuffed men are labour unionists, precisely among the highest representatives of the Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions, and the three characters on the left are mafia bosses who are being released from prison despite their involvement in smuggling that is declared in the caption.

This cartoon draws inspiration from two events that came to light in the news in the weeks prior to the publication of the *Gırgır* issue in question, namely an operation against some clandestine organisations and the start of the trial against DİSK. On November 11 1980, several men had been taken into custody under accusation of being chiefs of mafia organisations, their trial was conducted one month later and resulted in the arrest of fifteen out of twenty-three suspects on December 13. The same days saw the opening of a collective trial against 577 DİSK members who had previously been taken into custody based on their political activity; the first sentences were pronounced on December 27, when sixty-eight members of the confederation were arrested, including Abdullah Baştürk and Fehmi Işıklar, respectively its president and secretary general.[17]

The near synchronicity of these two relevant pieces of news shed light on the double standard that military tribunals had in store for unionists and criminals. For, whereas public opinion could not know whether it was after fair trials that only some of the men initially suspected of managing illicit traffic were arrested (the appellation *baba* with which they were addressed in the news suggested that they allegedly covered the highest steps of mafia organisations), or better said that almost half of them were released, it appeared nonetheless manifest that the scale and justifications for arrests was disproportionate. In the end, fifteen mafia bosses versus sixty-eight unionists were being arrested at the same time, the former for illegal issues the latter for union activity.

By bringing together the destiny of the protagonists of both trials in the same prison space, this cartoon denounces the contradictory nature of the two sentences and implies a

[17] Other head members of the confederation were arrested in the days that followed, for example the vice president, Kemal Nebioğlu on January 6, 1981; this, anyway, overlaps with the day of publication of this cartoon.

strong hint of partiality, if not corruption of military tribunals. This is cleverly done by pretending to show the "real" reason for the acquittal of mafia men, which is not their innocence but rather the concern on the part of the authorities that their unethical behaviour will end up spoiling the moral integrity of the unionists. The moral parameter that places the chiefs of criminal organisations and DİSK representatives on two opposite vertices of the same axis in the guard's words shows that the guilt of the former and innocence of the latter are beyond question, they are taken for granted; nevertheless, the decision to imprison the innocent and let the guilty go free is preferred to the logical, opposite one. Here lies the first criticism that the cartoon directs at those responsible for the two sentences.

By presenting such choice as justified by a will to protect the unionists, the illustration puts forward its second condemnation of the regime, that of unfairness and exploitation of the unionists' case. Ironically, after having repeatedly disregarded all moral codes to the detriment of innocent unionists (first by taking them into custody, then during their trial, and finally by condemning them), the authorities suddenly show an unprecedented interest in their protection that is hard to believe. This concern inevitably appears fake and driven by other hidden interests, chiefly the release of mafia bosses.

Both points of criticism outlined above, and in general the accusation that the arrest of labour unionists is a challenge to common sense and fair logic, are made more effective by the attitude of the mafia men, who sneak toward the exit hesitantly and with a bewildered expression on their faces, as if, according to them too, the level of favouritism shown in their regard had gone too far. The embarrassment that is revealed by their body language suggests a certain morality that astonishes: these men, whose business implies a denial of moral values, whose immorality is being loudly condemned in this very same scene by the guard, hence whom the reader imagines as deprived of any ethic concern, are somehow touched by their own release.[18] In other words, against all the expectations their "moral cords" resonate facing their privilege, especially in relation to the discrimination of the unionists; the oxymoron reached through the ethical concern expressed by the body language of the mafia men is the most powerful expression of the degree of absurdity and unfairness that lies in the condemnation of the syndicalists.

Going back to reality, it goes without saying that the official and unofficial reasons for the acquittal of nine mafia chiefs and the arrest of sixty-eight unionists were not the

[18] With respect to the characters' body language and expressions, it remains unclear why the two prison guards are depicted in an angry and aggressive attitude toward the prisoners of which they are respectively in charge. This is presumably a way to emphasize their brutality, an aesthetic mirror of the "evil" nature of the authority that they embody.

coexistence problems that could have arisen in case the indicted were all to share the same prison cell – an eventuality quite unlikely in itself. The whole sense of this cartoon may be understood as a reaction to the lack of credibility of the regime, embodied by the military court judges, in relation to the *baba* case and the first phase of the DİSK trial. Better said, in the light of the fact that a certain incoherence emerges from the two processes, especially once examined in relation to each other, it is as if in this illustration *Gırgır* were searching for a feasible hypothesis, the *real* reason that could justify the unionists' arrest, beyond their political involvement in trade unions that is hard to accept as a sufficient charge. However, the "morality theory" does not justify the state's tolerance toward clandestine business and the parallel zero tolerance toward trade unionism, it thus fails to provide an acceptable explanation of what is allowed and what is not according to the authorities, leading to the natural conclusion that a witch-hunt was being perpetrated against labour unionists.

To conclude, the satire here is based on a series of contradictions in terms that drawing from and reacting to two major events that hit the headlines at the time denounce the stigmatisation of trade unionism, judicial violence against unionists and their persecution as specific target of repression.

Artists and intellectuals

A second current of cartoons began to insist on another category of people who became victims of mass arrests, namely artists and intellectuals. Generally speaking the risk of persecution to which this group was subject was higher than that of unionists due to the fact that, willingly or not, their public visibility developed at two levels, that is, through their work and as public figures. This implied that not only the content, meaning and message of their work exposed them to the scrutiny of the regime, but also their public statements, interviews, press releases, participation in ceremonies and award competitions, and any other appearance in public. So, writers, journalists, actors, directors, singers, painters, musicians and performers from any artistic domain came to be persecuted for their texts, declarations, and the iconic role that they embodied during the military triennium or that had gained them fame in the previous years (as exponents of a political trend, as representatives of ethnic minorities, as symbols of rebellion).

The list of topics that became taboo was long and ranged from the promotion of universally accepted political values and ideologies, to the typically local criticism of the

ruling performance of the Evren government. Furthermore, forbidden topics overcame the boundaries of the political sphere and the subtle line between acceptable and illicit themes was left to the subjective perception of prosecutors and the junta, with the result that the persecution of artists and intellectuals was subject to arbitrary decisions rather than to an established set of criteria. This led to a situation in which, except for the obvious cases of explicit political engagement, arrests became unpredictable.

Overall, between 1980 and 1983, 114,000 books were seized, 937 films were banned, and 2,729 writers, journalists and actors were tried for their opinions,[19] their cases acquiring international attention for their infamous accusation of *düşünce suçluları*, criminals of thought.

Anonymous artists and intellectuals

Gırgır dedicated a wide set of cartoons to those "guilty" of thought. Let it suffice to mention two examples. An illustration that appeared in the magazine on September 25 1983 shows the bare interiors of a cell where two prisoners are sitting on their respective places on a bunk bed (Fig. 41). As with the cartoons that were discussed above, here too nothing suggests that the men could be terrorists or criminals; thus, we assume they may be political prisoners. However, a contrast between the two emerges at first glance due to their attitude and physical traits. The one who occupies the top bunk is distractedly praying with a *tespih* in one hand and smoking a cigarette in the other while lying with a resigned expression on his face, whereas the other is sitting on the bottom bed holding a pen and a notebook. The latter shows an active attitude as he points at the window close to his cell mate and enthusiastically asks: "Can we swap place for a bit? I need to describe a street for my new novel".

Prayer breads versus pen and paper, resigned versus engaged are the two dichotomies that mark the different identities of the two prisoners, who embody the ordinary man and the intellectual, respectively. The cigarette and prayer breads stand as symbols of "the common Turkish man" and the absence of details that could add to his identity, in particular that could reveal his vocation, reiterates his "anonymity". The latter suggests his innocence and serves the purpose of stressing by contrast the intellectual endeavour of his cell mate. While the crime that earned the former his detention is not clearly stated and might be ascribed to

[19] Cf. İsmet G. İmset, "The PKK: Terrorists or Freedom Fighters?" *International Journal of Kurdish Studies* Vol. 10, No. 1/2, (1996): 60.

political reasons, the latter is presented to the reader as a novelist, who, in all likelihood, was arrested for some declarations or passages of his literary production that the regime must have found "inappropriate".

The second example is a cartoon published on November 20 1983 that puts forward the vision of an extremely tiny prison cell where two men are forced to share their daily life (Fig. 42). Both men are shown in the process of writing something on the cell walls. One is comfortably writing a few lines while standing; conversely, the other is composing a long text that starting from the roof and continuing along one wall has now reached the floor, forcing him into an uncomfortable position. His text has already covered a significant amount of space and due also to the limited dimensions of the cell it is likely that the walls will be fully covered with words soon, forcing him to cut the text short or leave it unfinished.

Who are these two prisoners, what are they writing on the walls and why? The texts that they are composing are presented in such a stylised way that no single word may be read by the reader; however the content seems to be irrelevant while what matters is the length, which pushes the prisoner who is writing the shorter text to suggest to the other: "[You'd better] write a poem, novels are hard...", referring to the insufficient space provided by the walls. It is thus understood that we are dealing with two writers, namely a poet and a novelist, who, like in the previous case, were presumably arrested for their political stand.

In both cartoons the reader is confronted with cases of intellectuals' imprisonment. The vocation with which the detainees were busy before the arrest and that earned them detention is revealed in a way that entails a strong political impact. For, whereas their occupation could have been disclosed through verbal allusions, statements or symbolic visual details (like, for instance, a pen behind the ear), it is instead made explicit by portraying them in the act of performing it. In other words, the reader understands that the prisoners are writers from the fact that they are shown while carrying on their intellectual endeavour despite the fact that this is precisely the factor that led to their arrest.

In none of the two illustrations is the *Gırgır* reader able to decipher or foresee the content of the texts that are being composed; nonetheless, it is the act of writing itself that is relevant here, as it proves that these writers are resolute that they will not give up thinking and turning their ideas into written material. In this respect, the novels and lines that the three writers are producing do not have to be necessarily permeated with political messages in order to represent a challenge to the (prison) authorities. They might denounce practices like large-scale arrests and treatment in jail or they might be more introspective, abstract, or sentimental, just to give some examples – exactly in the same way as not only explicitly politically

engaged intellectuals and artists were hit by repression, but also others whose work addressed less controversial issues and even apolitical themes.

That cartoonists take a stand that is clearly in favour of the protagonists of their illustrations, in these two cases and generally speaking in the satirical sketches dedicated to the prisoners of thought, becomes manifest in the dual reading that these cartoons offer, which puts forward, on the one hand, an accusation against the regime for the unfair persecutions of intellectuals, and, on the other, pays tribute to the victims of such persecution. The latter are actually presented to the reader in a way that stresses their courage, as they appear determined to use their most powerful tool, their intellect, to perpetrate their own personal form of resistance to repression. In fact, within the walls of the prison cell, where freedom is denied, writing becomes the weapon to reiterate their own innocence – by showing that it is an activity that implies no crime – and, at the same time, a ploy not to surrender to the *diktats* of the regime.

Resistance takes two different forms in these illustrations. In the cartoon analysed first, it is realised through the desire to look through the window; for the imprisoned writer the street beyond the prison bars is perceived as an open space where free action, speech and movement are allowed, it thus becomes a site of freedom, the one that is physically closest to himself and that is separated from him only by a wall. The outside becomes a symbolic representation of the impossible, of all the freedoms that are intentionally denied in jail, and, as such, it comes to represent the forbidden.

So, what the writer accomplishes when he expresses the wish to look through the window is an approach to what is denied, hence a will to infringe the limits that the authorities have imposed on him. Not only does this challenge become manifest at physical level, by sitting next to the window and staring at the street, it is also enacted at intellectual level by thinking, imagining and writing about it, for it is the passage in the novel where the street is described that ultimately projects the writer outside the prison space.

In the second cartoon the act of resistance is even more determined as the two prisoners are immortalising their intellectual effort on the cell walls, very visibly. The exploitation of the walls should be understood as carrying three meanings. The first is that the imprisoned writers do not surrender facing the evident lack of a notebook, on the contrary in their absolutely empty cell where (unlike in the previous illustration) no paper is provided they are determined to write anyway, on the only existing surface.

The second meaning is that whatever they are writing they will not be able to hide it from the prison guards during inspections. The guards could (and, in all probability, will)

punish them in relation to two accusations, namely the act of defacing the cell – which is, let us remember, a place where strict discipline is in force and, not least, a space that belongs to the state – and that of communicating ideas, opinions, and even feelings without permission, thus violating the limits on their freedom of expression. The evident risk of punishment that the two prisoners are prepared to run proves insubordination, hence lack of fear toward the authorities.

This leads to the third meaning of the scene, which is that the act of writing on the cell walls denotes not only bravery but also a challenging attitude. This is determined by the fact that the words composed by the two prisoners are immortalised on the most stable of surfaces, a wall. As a consequence they cannot be removed by simply throwing them into the litter bin or setting fire to them as if they were written on a piece of paper. On the contrary, in order to erase these words an active reaction is required on the part of the prison authorities, who will be compelled to clean the walls or repaint them if they are determined to plainly void this act of disobedience.

In other words, what the decision to write novels and poems on the cell walls ultimately implies is an open challenge, where for the authorities it will not suffice to inflict a punishment to the detainees according to the usual "vertical" assertion of power. Rather, they will have to confront them on equal terms, on the same ground, in the cell that actually is their own ground and that is more familiar to the prisoners who are forced to spend endless time in it than to the authorities that actually owe and manage it. In sum, composing on the walls sends the clear message that silencing these prisoners of thought will not be as easy as expected.

At this point, it is necessary to reflect on what could initially appear as a pitfall of these cartoons, which is the fact that the prisoners portrayed here do not embody specific renowned writers. This general identity makes it impossible for the reader to verify the realism of the scenes presented in the two illustrations, in particular to learn whether there were cases of prisoners of thought who actually composed their work on the walls of their cell, and whether intellectuals who carried on their struggle during detention were in the majority or only exceptions. Certainly, it is known that many of them developed various strategies of intellectual freedom notwithstanding their physical constraints, like, for instance, the production and smuggling of prison cartoons with which we are already familiar. So, it may be the case that the actions that emerged in these illustrations were, too, among these acts of resistance. The unknown features of the protagonists here do not provide accurate

information in this sense. Yet, as a matter of fact neither emerges as a primary aim of the cartoonists who, instead, seem to put forward a general stereotype of intellectuals on purpose.

The portrayal of the "anonymous intellectual" in the act of writing in jail allows cartoonists to express a message of solidarity that is not destined to specific writers, rather extended to this category of prisoners as a whole. Here cartoonists are paying homage to the courage that intellectuals demonstrate by expressing their opinions and, in so doing, by being ready to run the risk of being targeted by the regime. The moral, intellectual and political integrity of these intellectuals is understood to be so high that, although cartoonists are not able to see what happens behind the prison walls, it is beyond question for them that they are carrying on their struggle also behind bars, perhaps even more so. While these prisoners' bodies are incarcerated, their minds and conscience are still running free.

The cartoons dedicated to the category of prisoners of thought who are being generally referred to here as artists and intellectuals represent a wide *corpus* that denounce the detention of not only novelists and poets, as we have seen, but also painters, engravers, cartoonists, singers, musicians, actors and directors. Denouncing repression and showing solidarity with prisoners emerge as the two *fils rouges* of these cartoons that, while apparently based on a monothematic scheme – the one of the imprisoned artists or intellectuals who persevere in their activity notwithstanding their limited freedom and precarious conditions – actually develop along various narrative models, whose most evident variation is in the mood of the prisoners in question. This is to say that the bravery, to some extent even optimism that emerges in the two cartoons discussed above sometimes gives in to negative feelings like boredom and dejection. However negative their emotional status, these prisoners of thought never appear subjugated to power.

Famous artists

While cartoons dedicated to "anonymous" artists and intellectuals proliferated, *Gırgır* did not remain impassive in the face of specific cases of political persecution either. The magazine was certainly not new to the representation of celebrities, who had been protagonists of its caricatures, comic strips, photomontages, and cartoon series from the very beginning, that is to say when its humour was mainly based on nudity and sexuality, before moulding its socio-political identity. Artists, by which we should generally understand the

names who gained notoriety in the television, cinema and music sectors, had been a constant of *Gırgır* in the 1970s and had gained a space in the magazine that intellectuals hardly ever reached. This was due to the simple fact that, in its mission to promote a popular satire, the magazine necessarily had to play with iconic figures with which the masses were familiar. Thus the stars of stage and screen had a natural advantage over, say, writers and journalists who could establish themselves among the educated readership for their pieces of work, but whose physical appearance – a crucial element for the success of graphic satire – would presumably remain unknown to the wide public.

Artists, therefore, were among the protagonists of *Gırgır* before the 1980 coup. And remained so afterwards. What changed after September 12 was the emergence of "artists' cartoons" with a new political connotation. So, cartoons dedicated to famous names who became victims of repression found room on the pages of the magazine too, along with comic portrayals of, to mention two examples (Fig. 43 and 44), the singer Orhan Gencebay being secretly spied on and recorded while singing in the shower (by a music pirate who then sells on the street a cassette of him singing in the privacy and intimacy of his bathroom "Oh is there anything like washing [yourself]? Ohh, gosh how beautiful, nay nay nom")[20], and singer, composer and actor Zeki Müren getting ready to make a television appearance on New Year's Eve by using excessive make-up (two labourers are mixing huge quantities of creams, lotions and face powder on the floor of his changing room as if they were mixing concrete)[21].

The illustrations of notorious persecuted artists stand out from their "anonymous artists" counterparts insofar as in this case the protagonists are not necessarily captured in the act of performing their art or carrying on an explicit act of resistance against oppression. Rather, being easily recognisable by their physical features, their representation is more frequently centred on their status of prisoners as such, presented as a contradiction itself that needed no further message.

This happened, for instance, in one of the most extraordinary cases of political persecution of an artist at that time, against the actor, scriptwriter and movie director, Yılmaz Güney. On a page entirely dedicated to the arts (cinema, theatre, ballet, painting and literature, presented with one satirical illustration each), Güney is introduced by a caption as Turkey's most awarded artist and is represented in jail while resting on a thin mattress on the floor, his back lying against the iron door of his cell (Fig. 45). The unusual aspect that immediately

[20] *Gırgır*, January 4 1981.
[21] *Gırgır*, January 3 1982.

catches the eye is that other cells doors are visible next to his own one, meaning that he is sitting in the corridor, so outside rather than inside his cell.

The reason for his being accommodated on the "wrong side" of the door seems to be that his cell is filled with so many prizes and recognitions that no space is left for him inside, as is suggested by the deformation of the door that appears curved under the pressure of the enormous quantity of certificates and accolades that overflow from the cell, especially from the sliding peephole and the edge between the door and the wall. A comment made by a prison guard who is observing the scene with a colleague confirms this impression, as he says: "Let's find a solution for this Yılmaz Güney, with all the awards that he got there is no more space in his cell. He lies in the corridor, poor man".

The caricature unmistakably denounces the paradox of an acclaimed artist finding himself in prison. In fact, by the time of the military coup Güney was one of the most prolific actors of Turkey and, indeed, its most renowned director on the international scene. Active in the film industry since the late 1950s, he had acted in leading and minor roles in more than a hundred movies and had written, directed and produced sixty-one films.

Güney had hit the big time in 1970 with *Umut* (Hope), a neorealist movie that won five recognitions (best film, best director, best scenario, best actor and best photography) at the 2nd Adana Golden Boll Film Festival on the same year and gained recognition abroad by being awarded the Selectors' Commission Special Prize at the Grenoble Film Festival. In 1971 his movies *Acı* (Pain), *Umutsuzlar* (The Hopeless) and *Ağıt* (Elegy) monopolized the Adana Golden Boll Film Festival winning nine out of eleven awards; in 1975 his movies *Endişe* (Anxiety), Arkadaş (*The Friend*), and *Zavallılar* (The Poor Ones) won the best film, second best film and third best film awards respectively at the Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival.

But it was in the two years prior to the coup that Güney definitely affirmed himself on the international scene, in particular through *Sürü* (The Flock), a tragedy that he wrote and produced in 1978 which in the following year won three prizes (best movie, best actress, and the special award) at the Locarno Film Festival, two awards (the one of the International Protestant Film Jury and the one of the Catholic Film Organisation) at the Berlin Film Festival, and the Best Film Award at the International Outstanding Films Contest in Belgium, and that in 1980 was awarded best movie both at the London Film Festival and at the 10th International Antwerp Film Festival, and came third in the critics' award category at the Rotterdam Festival. In the meanwhile, also *Düşman* (The Enemy), based on a screenplay

written by him won two awards (the Special Jury Award and the International Catholic Film Organisation's First Prize) at the 30th Berlin Film Festival.

Thus, it emerges that the great number of prizes that peep out from his cell in the cartoon are not an exaggeration, they rather constitute a visual representation of the fame and recognition that Güney had actually acquired by the time of the military rule.

It is certainly astonishing to envisage such an acclaimed artist behind bars; yet, Güney had been familiar with detention for a long time also before the military intervention as, since the early 1960s, his troubles with politics, power and justice had been as intense as his own career. His first prison experience was in 1961, when he was arrested under the first military government for publishing a novel permeated with leftist values which earned him eighteen months of imprisonment. He was arrested again during the military interregnum of 1971-1973 for anarchic activities and, freed in 1974 following the general amnesty for political prisoners, he was imprisoned a third time two years later with a charge of murdering a public prosecutor. On September 12, he was serving the term of imprisonment established by this charge, so he was already in jail irrespective of the junta.

It should be explained that the movies that Güney realised during his detention were accomplished in practice by his assistant Şerif Gören, who actually directed them on the field following the meticulous instructions that he gave them from behind bars. In other words, detention proved an insufficient measure to discourage him from pursuing his artistic engagement. Directing movies from prison was a way of political engagement that Güney had experimented before the military regime and that he carried on also afterwards, as it is proved by the realisation of *Yol* (Road), which will be briefly outlined in a few paragraphs.

In the light of this, the fact that in this caricature Güney is portrayed as spending his time in prison by comfortably lying on his mattress with his hands crossed behind the head, so essentially by doing nothing, should be regarded as assuming a further meaning beyond the basic representation of his captivity intentionally displayed as such in order to denounce the paradox of an imprisoned artist (which distinguishes "famous" artists cartoons from their "anonymous" counterparts, as explained above). In the case of Güney even lying on the mattress implies a political action as his idleness is only illusory and we know that while he seems to be resting he is in fact tactfully following the shooting of his movies at distance.

Güney's long detention in the 1970s explains a detail that marks another difference between this and the other "artists cartoons", that is its date of publication. While the majority of caricatures that condemn the repressive policies of the regime were created at least a few

months after the military seizure of power, this illustration appeared on *Gırgır* on September 21 1980, that is to say in the second issue that was published after the coup.

Judging from its time of publication, one could believe that no connection exists between the criticism of Güney's imprisonment which is the core message of this cartoon and the military rise to power, and that the same illustration could have equally appeared in any other issue between 1978 and 1980, that is at any time before the coup throughout the period that matched with both his detention and winning of international awards, since after all it was not the junta who had determined his imprisonment. However, it would be misleading to deem the choice of this date, that exactly straddles the old and the new political order, as a mere coincidence.

With this caricature *Gırgır* seems to put forward a question to the reader and, if possible, to the regime itself: what will happen to Güney now that the military have taken the helm of the country, now that political persecutions are likely to be legitimised and systematised under the official pretext of order, security and anti-terror measures? For, even though the pattern of mass arrests had not taken shape at the time of the realisation of this cartoon, it was clear that hard times awaited politically exposed people. And Güney was an overtly leftist artist, imprisoned for charges connected to his political militancy.

A digression is necessary at this point regarding this aspect, and in particular his implication in the murder of the public prosecutor. Let us clarify that although it seems to be not in the intentions of this cartoon (as it is not our aim either) to take a position in favour of or against the court's verdict, to judge the artist's innocence or guilt, here Güney is put under an unmistakably positive light as, besides emphasising the visible presence of the multitude of prizes that he won, the illustration also presents him in an attitude that creates an air of respectability around him. This is obtained by portraying him in an absolutely placid and relaxed attitude that denotes a total acceptance of his status of detainee. This is characteristic of politically engaged jailed intellectuals, who distinguish themselves from imprisoned ordinary people and from criminals through the absence of resignation, on the one hand, and of trouble-making, on the other.

This respectability and the fact that generally speaking despite the charge of murder Güney was not perceived as a criminal by society definitely emerge here through the attitude of the two prison guards, who are worried about the conditions that he is forced to endure in spite of the fact that they appear frankly more comfortable than those of many other political prisoners. The degree of understanding, solidarity, and empathy manifested by the remark of the prison guard, that finds no equal in other cartoons, subverts the traditional prisoner-guard

power relation; it breaks the prison hierarchy that is, instead, so marked in other prison scenes, to ultimately stress the high esteem in which Güney was held at that time. In brief, the guards' attitude proves that he was a celebrated public figure whose legal vicissitudes had not undermined his respectability and popularity in the country.

There is also another aspect that the cartoon brings up, precisely through the multitude of prizes that burst from his cell, which is the international dimension of Güney's respectability, his established worldwide fame that had placed him among the most celebrated names of Turkey abroad. This aspect leads to a reflection on the fact that his impossibility to attend the numerous festivals and ceremonies abroad where he was due to collect prizes and awards throughout the previous decade had turned his imprisonment into an international case that was certainly known and supposedly debated also outside the Turkish borders. As a consequence, willingly or not his detention had inevitably made him a shop window of the complicated relationship between the arts and politics in the country in the eyes of the world.

In the light of this, it emerges that what the cartoon ultimately puts forward is something more than a mere question, it is a warning to the military of the fact that Güney's case would become a symbolic litmus test for the newly set regime, hence a challenge for the junta to which not only the Turkish public but also the cinematic community worldwide would now inevitably pose a powerful question: while in these first days in power you are sending reassuring messages, presenting yourselves to the people of Turkey and also to the international political platform as paternal (not despotic), protective (not threatening), acting for the sake of civil society (not to scare them), what fate awaits this artist? Are you finally going to loosen the rope around him, in accordance with the positive image of yourselves that you are so energetically promoting in these days? This explains the appearance of this cartoon at the dawn of regime; in the end, it emerges that the illustration is a direct reaction to Evren's public declarations that abounded on those days and through which the military were advertising their self-proclaimed positive and righteous political role.

What happened afterwards shows that the questions posed by *Gırgır* remained ignored, as the relationship between the director and power did not improve; on the contrary, it got even worse confirming that yes, Güney's case was a litmus test for the regime but no, the military would not act according to the values of righteousness and justice that they initially advocated. Under the military rule Güney's films were banned in Turkey,[22] a call to deliver his movies was made and the films of more than a hundred picture shows were

[22] Screening of the movie *Ağıt* had been already abolished from TRT programme in 1979.

collected and destroyed, along with the related posters and Güney's books. In brief, his entire work was reserved the same treatment as weapons, to be wiped from the face of the earth.

Despite that, these measures did not intimidate the artist, who did not cease to write screenplays under the regime and exactly in those years created his most discussed movie, *Yol*. While in jail, conceivably because of jail, and above all notwithstanding jail, the director conceived this plot set in the aftermath of September 12, a dive into human suffering narrated through the experiences of five men. The protagonists are prisoners on a home leave, and the military rule clearly emerges on the background.

In 1981 Güney escaped from prison and fled the country, the film was finally edited in Switzerland and released the following year when it immediately started to gain prestigious recognitions, especially at the Cannes Film Festival where it obtained the Golden Palm, the Prize of the International Federation of Film Critics (FIPRESCI) and the Prize of the Ecumenical Jury. In 1983 *Yol* won the French Syndicate of Cinema Critics Award, in France it was also nominated for the César Award and in the US for the Best Foreign Film at the Golden Globes. In 1984 it won the ALFS Award at the London Critics Circle Film Awards.

In the meanwhile Güney had gone into exile in France, where he found protection and support as an exiled artist and political prisoner. And it was in cooperation with the French government that in 1983, while Turkey was getting ready to return to parliamentary democracy, he directed *Duvar* (The Wall), a brutal prison story. *Duvar* stands as his last work, as Güney died of cancer in Paris the following year.

In sum, while his human and intellectual freedoms were being denied in Turkey, his case, work and fame were gaining increasing recognition abroad. Then, it is perhaps predictable and certainly ironic that as a result of the tenacity against him Güney effectively became a political icon, both in the country and for the international public. His private, political and artistic life were intertwined and indivisible, and witnessed to the public a story of resistance that had repeatedly emerged in conjunction with the first and second military coups as well as during civilian governments, and that reached its peak under the 1980-1983 military rule.

In conclusion, the decision to dedicate some space to this artist while past and present administrations attempted to silence him and everything related to his work was being censored in Turkey is not to be taken for granted. Publishing cartoons about him acquired an even more subversive meaning if we consider that it could be the case that, as in this caricature, Güney was represented in a way that overtly paid homage to his career, underlined the contradiction of his detention and shown unconditional respect for his person. This is what

Gırgır did, overtly manifesting solidarity with his intellectual, political and artistic stand, hence breaking the "Güney taboo". Once more, the magazine was showing no fear of challenging power denouncing one of its weakest points, repression, drawing also from the world of show business and giving voice even to the most controversial artists and intellectuals without hesitation.

Ordinary people

It emerged so far that labour unionists, on the one hand, and artists and intellectuals, on the other, embody the two categories of people who are frequently portrayed in prison cartoons that are centred on the identity of detainees and that aim at stressing the injustice of their arrests, motivated by political rather than legal concerns. The third current that was announced at the beginning of this sub-chapter is the one that sees ordinary people as victims of the same injustice.

As it was already explained, during the military triennium people of any age, gender, educational level, and socio-economic background constantly ran the risk of being arrested with accusations linked to alleged political activities – accusations that most of the times were based on nothing more than suspicion, false witnesses or orchestrated confessions. Parallel to the increasing frequency of these arrests, also the illustrations dedicated to their victims grew in number, recording a real boom.

These cartoons shed light on various aspects of the detention of common people, who were not political extremists, could even be strangers to politics, and in most of the cases had no understanding of prison life, its codes and unwritten rules until their arrest. For instance, some illustrations highlighted the difficulties that these newcomers were forced to endure while others portrayed their perception of the prison experience, some reproduced the activities that they carried on behind bars while others revealed their small yet courageous acts of resistance.

As a matter of fact, the current dedicated to ordinary prisoners includes the majority of cartoons that are object of this chapter since in most of the cases it is the common man that is made the protagonist of the scenes set in prison, except for the illustrations that insist on purpose on the specific identity of detainees like unionists, artists or intellectuals, as we have seen. In this respect, to a certain extent it is fair to consider as part of this current also the caricatures exposed in the first part of this chapter while discussing the phenomenon of mass

imprisonment and the derived issue of overcrowded prisons, as their protagonists are, in fact, ordinary men. Equally, the illustrations that will be analysed below as examples of *Gırgır*'s commitment to shed light on other aspects of the repressive nature of the regime may be deemed part of the same series too, insofar as the victims presented to the reader are once again ordinary citizens.

In the light of the high number and variety of "ordinary people cartoons" and given the fact that a substantial sample of them will emerge in the following sections of this chapter, it appears reductive here to present the few examples that space constraints would allow us to discuss at this point; instead, it is deemed more appropriate to let the "ordinary people aspect" emerge in the following sections, during the discussion of further repressive sides of the military rule and in-depth cartoon analysis. Therefore, let us constantly bear in mind while examining the next illustrations that, no matter which aspect in particular they finally denounce, at the root of the different and multiple accusations that they put forward lies a criticism of the fact that detention has become a common occurrence and the majority of inmates are ordinary, innocent citizens.

Prison life

Having discussed the phenomenon of mass imprisonment and the identity of the thousands of people who became its victims, let us now linger on the prison space to investigate how life went by day after day beyond its walls.

A clarification is necessary before delving into the actual argumentation. One of the first changes that the junta made when it came to power concerned the duration of arrests. While until September 12 people could be held in police custody for up to fifteen days, after the coup this limit was raised to eighty days, adding the eventuality that under request of the police the period of custody for the same person could be extended up to three more months. Thus, the authorities were allowed to keep people under arrest for a duration that could reach nearly six months and, as lawyer Erdinç Uzunoğlu reminds us,[23] cases of victims of arrests that spent a hundred and twenty, even a hundred and eighty days under arrest were actually recorded.

[23] The interview appeared in the documentary movie *5 No'lu Cezaevi: 1980-1984*, directed by Çayan Demirel, produced by Ayşe Çetinbaş, photography by Koray Kesik, editing by Burak Dal, music by Ahmet Tirgil, Nizamettin Arıç, Serdar Can, 2009, Surela Film, Istanbul.

Due to the long duration of arrests the differences between the pre- and post-trial period, between custody and conviction, between police station and jail were often reduced to minimum, not to say annulled, especially in the light of the treatment to which its victims could be subject. In fact, the moments of confrontations with the authorities like questioning and interrogations were a prerogative of both phases and the dynamics of cell life, with its possible activities and the variety of emotions that detention generated, belonged to both spaces.

We should not be surprised, then, to find these similarities reflected in the cartoons, where a certain ambiguity may be noticed that makes it often difficult to identify prisoners as remanded or convicted, to detect where exactly the scenes portrayed are meant to take place, whether in a police station, in its *jandarma* counterpart or rather in prison. And when the latter is true, it appears generally hard to differentiate between civil and military prison, and even more among open, semi-open and closed detention centres, and finally between ordinary closed and high security ones.

On some occasions the illustrations themselves present more or less explicit details that help the reader in solving these ambiguities. For instance, in scenes that are set at the threshold of prison buildings the type of detention centre that we are faced with is usually made explicit by a sign next to the main door, as we could notice earlier in this chapter when we ran into the "prison" where the arriving detainee maintained that he had booked his place in advance, and when we got acquainted with the modalities of a walking break in a "closed prison".

Another detail in our hands is the knowledge of the fact that in military prisons detention came to be disciplined according to the same rules and uniformity that characterised barracks life, so the heads and faces of detainees were shaved, all inmates had an identification number, and everyone was compelled to dress in the same uniform that usually consisted of a tracksuit and trainers, which were the outfit that best suited the military-style sports and training sessions to which prisoners were subject. Consequently, we deduce that in the caricatures where prisoners appear with clothes and physical features that match these ones the scene is likely to be set in a military prison.

A further clue is the fact that in the illustrations that reproduce moments of interrogations, questioners sometimes appear in uniform while on other occasions they wear plain clothes. When we are faced with the latter case we may suppose that we are being offered a glance into the room of a police station where the person under arrest is in the clutches of one or more commissioners.

A final clue, vague as it might be, is constituted by the place of origin displayed together with the name and surname of the author in the case of amateur and semi-amateur cartoons. As it was explained in Chapter 2, when prisoners sent their illustrations to *Gırgır* these were published on dedicated pages along with the ones of other non-professionals cartoonists that enjoyed, instead, freedom; and, while for the latter the place of origin was their town or neighbourhood, in the case of the former this was the name of the prison where the caricature was made.

Given that the majority of prisoners-cartoonists were, let us remember, political prisoners who had no experience with drawing prior to their arrest and who began to see in the publication opportunity that *Gırgır* offered them a way to communicate with the outside, to share their prison experience and eventually denounce its most "unsayable" aspects, it is reasonable to infer that the scenes that they portrayed drew from episodes and moments of prison life that they had experienced for real. This is to say that although these scenes could be reproduced in a way that did not necessarily have to exactly correspond to reality, they were manifestly inspired by it. Therefore, when it comes to amateur and semi-amateur prison cartoons it is through the caption about the author that we can at least solve the ambiguity concerning the type of prison and so identify, for example, a closed prison if the amateur cartoonist is detained in Trabzon, or an open detention centre if the cartoon is sent from Çanakkale.

These four categories of information may help when discerning some aspects of the conditions in which the prisoners who appear in the illustrations live, however we should be aware that such details are not always at the disposal of the reader and, even when they are, they can only partially solve the doubts that arise from the vast array of possibilities linked to the forms of detention. Above all, it appears particularly hard to recognise prisoners in pre-trial detention (remanded) from the ones whose sentence is being executed (convicted).

Therefore, the ambiguity that came to exist in the cartoons as a consequence of the change of rules regarding the length of pre-trial periods, of the adaptation of existing buildings to the demand of large scale arrests and of the creation of brand new types of detention centres will be maintained also in the analysis. By this it is meant that besides revealing – when possible – the four clues enumerated above, unless absolutely necessary for the understanding of the satire at stake the argument that follows will not discuss the stage of trial and kind of prison at any cost; rather, it will develop along the single, encompassing umbrella term of "prison life".

Observing the satirical appointments that *Gırgır* dedicated to the reality of jail life in those years, a clear pattern emerges that consists of two major axes under which various topics develop. These two currents, both dedicated to crucial aspects of the experience of detainees, differ from each other insofar as one is centred on the depiction of the routine of prisoners while the other is on the representation of moments that are outside that routine, in particular interrogations.

Prison routine

Concerning prison routine, a feature that is worth of notice before delving into the proper analysis is that nearly all the illustrations that fall under this category belong to the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page or to the back cover and, above all, that all of them were sent by amateur and semi-amateur cartoonists who found themselves in jail. It is thus surprising (or perhaps not) to ascertain that, as the analysis will show in a moment, the scenes portrayed in these cartoons give rise to an homogeneous scheme, proving that very similar kinds of problems and dynamics were common to prisoners located all over the country. What emerges from these satirical manifestations dedicated to the passing of time behind bars is, in fact, a wide array of issues that may essentially be categorised under three groups, namely problems, activities, and emotions.

Problems

In the first case we mean matters of practical nature with which prisoners were forced to live and that while unilaterally deemed unacceptable outside jail in the caricatures emerge as having lost their negative connotation and having become, instead, an integral part of the ordinary life that these prisoners have learnt to endure. Generally speaking, the issues that distinguish themselves as the most prominent ones in this respect fall under the wide topic of hygiene. The lack of concern for the fulfilment of minimum hygienic standards comes to the foreground of the prison experience on a significant number of occasions and in ways that vary from the predictable representation of dust and spider webs to less predictable details such as the presence of little stones in the dishes served to the inmates, to mention just two.

In an illustration that was sent from the closed prison of Trabzon and published on the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page of January 9 1983 (Fig. 46), the reader is faced with a prison courtyard that evidently has seen no cleaning for such a long time that a big spider web is now very visible in the middle of it, along with the spider itself that is shown weaving the web. The web originates from a corner that is created by a pole and a thread that connects the latter to a second pole, which stands parallel on the opposite end of a line marked on the floor to outline the middle of a barren volleyball playground. The two poles should normally support a tennis or volleyball net that predictably is not there, in accordance with the general negligence to which the place is left.[24] Yet, the pattern that the spider web is following is exactly the one of a volleyball net as it is developing toward the second pole in a way that will progressively fill the gap between the two as a real net would; accordingly, when two prisoners (heads shaved, in the same uniform) who are walking in the courtyard notice the growth of the spider web they are immediately reminded of a net and one of them happily exclaims: "One day we [will] play volleyball thanks to this spider!".[25]

In the first instance the illustration obviously denounces the squalor of prison spaces, but the real intention seems to be rather the representation of the attitude of inmates toward this difficult aspect. The speaking prisoner could have easily commented about the same spider web in a negative way, for example he could have exclaimed "Oh no, because of this

[24] As a matter of fact the courtyard appears well preserved and beside the spider web no other detail suggests poor hygienic conditions. This contrast, however, should be understood as deliberate in order to focus the attention entirely on the web, which is the object that allows the realisation of the satire.

[25] Actually this caricature is presented in two versions at the same time, namely the original one sent by the prisoner, characterised by a rather elementary style and a spelling mistake in the balloon, and a revised one where the scene as a whole is more clear and the exclamation is slightly revised, since in the original the prisoner says "Thanks to this spider today we [can] play volleyball". *Gırgır*'s editors might have wanted to project the sentence into the future (by replacing "today" with "one day") for the simple fact that the spider has not fully completed the volleyball web, but presumably also to strengthen the message of hope in the future that is conveyed by the attitude of the prisoners and that is the ultimate meaning of the illustration – as it will be argued soon in the main text.

Let us also point out that for appearing in two different versions this cartoon constitutes a rare exception as the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* cartoons could be subject to minor changes by expert cartoonists before being published but there was no habit of showing them in comparison to the professional version of the same. In the comment that follows the publication here Aral makes clear that the "twin publication" should not be perceived as a way to affirm his own style over the one of the amateur cartoonist-prisoner, or as a *diktat* of how a spider web, a prisoner character or the iron bars of a window should be drawn, for everyone has his own style and should make progress following it rather than according to a standardised way of drawing; he then explicitly adds that he realised his own version of the amateur cartoon in order to make the illustration stand out, without altering the composition or the narrative scheme; he then concludes that sometimes it is nice and joyful to share the same witticism.

The reason why we referred to Aral in person as the author of this comment although, as it was explained in Chapter 2, the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page was usually managed and commented by the whole team of professional cartoonists of *Gırgır* is that in the modified version of the cartoon the signature that carried the name and surname of the prisoner-author in the original, Avni Şahin, is replaced by the joined signature of their two forenames, Avni – Oğuz. In addition, this is a further feature that allows us to label this cartoon as an exception.

spider we'll have no other option than playing volleyball again", thus expressing boredom and irritation for the bad conditions of that space and its consequences on the daily life of prisoners, whom a spider web would force to the same routine instead of, say, allowing them to play tennis this time by weaving a spider web close to the floor. On the contrary, he reacts positively at its sight, showing a hint of optimism that inevitably clashes with his harsh condition as an inmate.

Then, appreciating the spider web becomes his act of resistance as notwithstanding his detention this prisoner is still able to look toward the future, he literally sees hope in squalor and shows he has learnt to see the best in the worst situation. To conclude, he faces up to detention with an attitude that contrasts with the regime of terror that the military was trying to establish not only in the country on a global scale but also within people's daily life and feelings; despite the fact that, as detainee, conceivably in a closed prison, this man embodies one of the worst scenarios that a victim of the military rule could face, his positive attitude clearly shows that the regime has failed to intimidate him.

Another example that is worth mentioning as far as the hygienic conditions experienced by detainees are concerned is a cartoon sent from Metris prison in Istanbul and published among the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* caricatures of September 20 1982 (Fig. 47). The scene takes place in a cell where the only "piece of furniture" visible to the reader is a trash bin, which is full of little stones that are piled so high that they have spilled out next to the bin. Two inmates stand in the middle of the cell staring at the bin while one of them reproaches the other: "How many times have I told you, don't throw the little stones that come from the food in the trash bin... they will think that we are digging a tunnel..."

The evident criticism that the illustration raises regards the food served in prison, as the comment unmistakably admits that the dishes served to prisoners are contaminated, supposedly for being not carefully washed before cooking, perhaps not washed at all, or for being prepared in kitchens where hygienic standards are not observed. The speaking prisoner refers to the little stones that "spice up" food with no emphasis, no astonishment, suggesting that they constitute the norm rather than an exception; moreover, the presence of a huge quantity of these little stones accumulated inside and around the litter bin proves that their presence is routine to an extent that overcomes the one that the words of the man let understand. Yet, the power of this illustration is not limited to this aspect.

As in the analysis of the previous illustration it was argued that the same issue (squalor) could have been denounced through a satirical construction built around the same

detail (the spider web) in a way that limited the scope of its satire to the criticism of the conditions of the penitentiary and that, instead, the spoken words of the protagonists were deliberately chosen to carry a further and stronger message, in this cartoon too a similar pattern may be detected. That is to say that the same detail of little stones could have been chosen to highlight the same problem of contaminated food in a different way, for instance by placing the litter bin under the window and having the prisoner exclaim "How many times I told you, don't leave the litter bin under the window... with all the little stones discarded from food that we throw away we'll end up hampering the circulation of air and light...". Instead, a specific allusion is included in the reproaching words of the inmate: the possibility to dig a tunnel to escape.

It is true that no admission of effectively planning an escape is made, and that the tunnel is mentioned in a way that seems to suggest that, on the contrary, the two men have no such intention; nonetheless, the very same fact of mentioning it implies that the inmates are aware of the existence of an opportunity to break out and that they are not afraid of referring to it loudly.

It could be objected that no real provocation lies in pronouncing the words "dig a tunnel" in this case, for the scene is presented in a way that shows that the two characters are having a conversation in the privacy of their cell, far from the supervision and control of the authorities. However, if we contextualise the cartoon, the extraordinary provocation that it implies becomes clear. Above all, we should not disregard the fact that the author of the illustration is a prisoner himself, who has sent the caricature to *Gırgır* being aware of the fact that it would be published in the magazine along with his full name and detention centre, making him fully identifiable.

In the light of this, a conscious will of self-exposure emerges on the part of the cartoonist, who, unlike the character who mentions the tunnel far from the threatening ears of the authorities, overtly writes about it on a medium that could possibly reach not only the prison guards who are in charge of his detention but virtually all the military and civil officers who could see the caricature, including the highest representatives of power. The risk derived by this illustration is thus enormous as it exposes its author to possible actions that could range from official measures aimed at avoiding any escape attempt, for example the tightening the control over him or even seclusion, to unofficial punishments like physical and psychological violence.

In conclusion, what is initially put forward as a criticism of the hygienic conditions to which prisoners are subject actually conceals an extraordinary provocation against the regime:

through his fictional alter ego the prisoner-cartoonist communicates that he is not afraid of power, specifically that he is not scared by the consequences that could derive from contemplating the existence of forms of disobedience of the decisions that the authorities have imposed on him (first and foremost his arrest, and then all the consequences that detention implies), and from overtly mentioning the one that in such circumstances emerges as the form of rebellion *par excellence*, a prison break.

A third aspect of the precarious hygienic conditions to which detainees were abandoned is, indeed, the presence of mice in the prisons. In spite of the fact that the two examples previously analysed suffice to detect the political strategies that guide the cartoons dedicated to the problems of prison routine, the illustrations that here will be referred to as "mice cartoons" are deemed worthy of mention insofar as with their massive presence in the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* and back cover pages they unmistakably hold a record in terms of quantity among the caricatures that portray prison life.

Mice are represented everywhere: in prison corridors, cells, toilets and courtyards. In some illustrations the appearance of these little animals carries out the mere function of highlighting their presence in jail, hence of denouncing the critical hygienic conditions of penitentiaries. This is the case of a comic strip sent by the Şirinyer prison of Izmir and published on the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* column of January 16 1983 that portrays two mice in the drainage pipe of a prison toilet (Fig. 48).

But more frequently these caricatures are not limited to showing the reader that jails are inhabited by as many mice as prisoners, they rather insist on a certain familiarity and complicity between the two. In fact, mice are never represented in a way that evokes dirt, risk of infections, filth or fear by prisoners; on the contrary, they are generally portrayed with human connotations and acquiring a friendly attitude toward prisoners.

If a general identikit of these mice is to be produced, it may be claimed that they are polite, able to speak, they listen to prisoners' frustrations (as we have seen on the occasion of the young *bekâr* man who is arrested and confesses to the mouse that he feels relieved after having at last found a place to live), and to a certain extent they embody a bridging function between inmates and the world outside. For instance, on some occasions they read newspapers and report the news to prisoners, and on some others they communicate the change of weather and the arrival of the new season to the men who are in solitary confinement. The humanised nature of these fictional animals is the reason why the word

"mice" is deliberately used instead of "rats" in this section, and it is also at the basis of the choice to use the pronoun "he" rather than "it" to refer to them in the singular form.

A worthy representative of the mice cartoons is a comic strip made in the prison of Afyon and published among the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* on January 16 1983 (Fig. 49).[26] The illustration presents a sequence of four frames of a mouse who is walking in a prison cell in the typical stereotyped attitude of a mature Turkish man who is absorbed in a series of reflections, since he is smoking a cigarette and rotating a *tespih* in his hands. This humanised mouse is in fact meditating on something crucial that emerges through four sentences that he pronounces while thinking loudly scene by scene, that is to say, in order: "Hey, I'm really depressed...", "Here too, nobody likes me.", "I'm always scorned, they kick me. Ow! Ow!" and "I'll dig a tunnel and run away but I'm unable to abandon [these] guys who will die of loneliness..." The mouse is thus reflecting on the idea of leaving jail and expresses concerns for the possible consequences of this action.

The sequence is built on an ambiguity that deliberately paves the way to two juxtapositions, one involving the "executioners" and the other the "victims" of prison violence. The first juxtaposition derives from the fact that it appears unclear whom the mouse refers to when he mentions those who do not like him and who treat him violently. Given the context, the complaint could be addressed essentially to two groups, either the prison authorities or the other mice who no doubt inhabit the prison building and that in this case, given the absence of human connotations and feelings characterising them, should be properly referred to as "rats".

The fact that the variables are exactly these two, along with the absence of clues that could help the reader solve the ambiguity in favour of one or the other, is no coincidence and should be understood as performing the function of placing rats and prison guards on the same level, hence, ultimately, of accusing the latter of being as low as rats. What would make the prison guards thus is their inhuman nature that becomes manifest through the violence, evil character and disrespect that they show towards those who are placed in a weaker position by their honest nature, like the protagonist of the cartoon and the prisoners.

Here lies the second juxtaposition, which sees the speaking mouse and the prisoners sharing the same mistreatment in jail by the hands of the general evil "they" to whom the

[26] This cartoon appears in this issue along with the just mentioned illustration of the two mice in the drainage pipes and the recently recalled comic strip of the innocent *bekâr* who finds himself in jail for no apparent reason. This is a rare case of publication of more than one (not only two but even three) prison cartoons in one single issue and even in the same space, the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page.

mouse refers. Indeed, the prisoners' position is weak first and foremost due to their status as inmates that places them at the bottom of the prison hierarchy; still, it should not be mistakenly assumed that this is the only reason why they are subject to "scorns and kicks", to quote the mouse.

In this illustration violence appears not as a simple matter of power relations within the prison building but rather as a matter of characters and attitudes, where some negative entities feel themselves authorised to use violence against honest and good-hearted souls like the mouse and the "guys" to whom he refers. The latter are victims as much as he not only for the obvious fact that as inmates they are in the weakest position but also because their sensibility does not allow them to defend themselves with the same tool, that is, violence.

Here the sensibility of both victims is not taken for granted (it would be a mistake to assume that prisoners, as such, are always emotionally fragile for we have already come across – and we will again – examples of resisting detainees) but rather inferred from the last sentence that the mouse pronounces. In said sentence his good feelings emerge from his concern for the mental and emotional conditions of detainees, to whom he refers with a certain degree of affection. Correspondingly, the high sensibility of the prisoners is explicitly admitted by foreseeing without doubt the loneliness that they will suffer if he abandons them. As a matter of clarity it should be also recognised that nowhere in this comic strip are prisoners actually mentioned; however, it is clear that the last sentence refers to them since the only category of people in jail who could suffer from the escape of a mouse, hence who seek his presence in order to fight desperation and loneliness, are, in fact, the inmates.

The prisoners and the protagonist of the comic strip thus have in common the same mistreatment, sensibility and habit of spending time together as a way to give strength to each other and alleviate the pains derived by violence and detention. The fundamental difference between the two, however, is that while detainees are forced in jail the mouse has the opportunity to abandon that place, he has the chance to choose a different future. Nonetheless, despite the fact that freedom is really at his fingertips, he is hesitant exactly in the light of the fact that his escape would deteriorate the emotional state of these men.

To conclude, the cartoon, or better the prisoner who created this comic strip – for it should always be kept in mind that these illustrations draw inspiration from their authors' experience of incarceration – pushes the limit of absurdity by giving life to a mouse who is worried for the prisoners, with the aims of, first, denouncing the fact that mice are so present in jail that detainees are forced to share spaces with them to the extent that they have become friendly, and second, of pointing to the fact that in the eyes of the inmates even a mouse

appears more human and sensible than those people who are agents of violence and oppression.

To summarise, it emerged that *Gırgır* used to publish cartoons that highlighted the problems that prisoners had to face day by day during their detention, and that these were not based on assumptions or indirect reports, for, on the contrary, the majority of these illustrations was created by actual detainees who, by drawing these sketches for the magazine, offered to the wide public an uncensored look at the real matters that affected their routine.

It is indeed surprising to detect a certain homogeneity in these illustrations, which all touch on issues related to cleanliness despite referring to different prisons across the country. This proves that it was not a priority of the state to guarantee the minimum standard of hygiene to prisoners. But it is even more astonishing to realise that all these cartoons put forward a second reading that moves beyond the mere complaint of the hygienic conditions of the prison buildings, which is certainly a brave accusation in itself, but communicate something more, in this case not only to the public but to the regime too.

The caricatures show that their authors are not discouraged nor scared by these problems which further complicate the experience of detention, that is already difficult *per se*; conversely, they prove that these amateur cartoonists have managed to reach a certain personal balance that not only allows them to accept them and live with them with relative peace of mind but also gives them courage and inspiration to reverse them at their own advantage. In fact, these illustrations not only denounce the conditions in which they live but they also, first, resist power (by maintaining an optimistic and forward looking attitude); second, they provoke and challenge power (by mentioning the eventuality of a prison break); and, third, they accuse power (by alluding to the fact that its representatives are less human and sensible than prison rats). Though they do not turn the tide of their physical constraints, these subtle cartoons and their double-layered witticisms plainly affirm their moral and intellectual victory over a regime that aims first and foremost at instilling a feeling of fear in them and that, evidently, is failing to do so.

Activities

After the illustrations highlighting the problems that prisoners had to face in their daily life, a second group of cartoons emerges from those dedicated to the depiction of prisoners'

routine: the activities that were carried out in the monotony of life behind bars. We have already ascertained that artists and intellectuals were often represented while carrying on the activities that had earned them fame, so writers were depicted while composing novels and poems in their cell, musicians while playing an instrument, painters while creating decorative motifs on the cell walls, and so on. When it comes to ordinary people, then, what do the cartoons tell us about the activities that they conceived during their long days?

An answer to this question is provided by a cartoon hailing from Metris prison and published on the back cover of *Gırgır* on November 14 1982 (Fig. 50). The view is of the interior of a prison cell where five cell mates are absorbed in their individual activities: one is knitting while sitting at a table in the background, a second one is sitting on a stool in the foreground where he is busy assembling a rudimentary contraption, a third one holds a fishing rod in a bowl full of water pretending to be fishing, the fourth is playing with a kite whose dimensions (small kite, short string) have been adapted to the limited space of the cell, and the last one pretends to be a diver by standing on a wooden box that represents a springboard beneath which a small water bowl stands in place of the sea or swimming pool.[27]

An evident paradox that emerges at first glance is that the five men appear completely at ease with what they are doing notwithstanding where they are: some of them look very focused on their activity while some others seem relaxed and happy. Overall they give the impression that each of them perceives this moment as if he were carrying on that very same activity in another place, say at home, in an atelier, on a lake or sea shore, in a park, but certainly not in the narrow space of the prison cell where they are forced together.

This impression is then confirmed by the only words that support the scene and that come from the mouth of the improvised fisherman, who explains: "What [should] we do, bro', we try not to break off from society". Thus, it emerges that our impression is in reality the actual intention of the protagonists, who do not confine themselves to the creation of random diversions to fight boredom and the slow passing of time; rather, they reproduce specific activities in order to establish a connection with the world outside jail and, ultimately, not to cease to feel part of it. In brief, by knitting, fabricating, fishing, kite-flying and diving,

[27] It should be made clear that the activities of the two men mentioned at first are not fully recognisable due to the rough line with which they are drawn; for example, the man who works at the table in the background could be knitting as much as writing a letter, and in the case of the one who sits on the foreground it is not clear what he is actually fabricating. However, these ambiguities do not seem to affect the analysis of the whole illustration to a great extent for its meaning results to be rather built around the other three characters, as it will be exposed in the main text.

these men project themselves into the life of freedom that they used to enjoy and of which they have been deprived.

The five activities that are represented in the scene are understood to be the ones of which the five men were fond before their arrest. Nonetheless, the specific choice of these ones, and in particular of kite-flying, fishing and diving, seems to be driven also by another goal, that is the one of strengthening the paradox of carrying on activities that belong to the world of "the free" in a detention centre. In fact, the same prisoners' intention of struggling to keep themselves tied to the world outside could have been conveyed also by drawing them in the act of, for instance, reading a newspaper;[28] but what makes the paradox effective is exactly the fact that the observer is faced with outdoor activities that normally require wide spaces being carried out within the limited perimeter of a prison cell.

Moreover, it is exactly thanks to these activities that the longing for freedom that dominates the feelings of the protagonists is not only verbally expressed (through the comment of the speaking character) but also visually represented and strongly felt. That is to say, the word "freedom", which is not mentioned specifically, is nonetheless successfully evoked by the presence of the kite, an undisputed symbol of freedom, and through the "performance" of two activities linked to the sea, wide infinite space *par excellence.*

A singular aspect that emerges observing the illustration in its entirety is that a sense of artificiality dominates the composition. First, the paradox of conducting outdoor activities in an enclosed space is not dissolved by the discovery of the reasons that motivate the activities; furthermore, none of the men seems irritated by the presence of the others notwithstanding the fact that some of the activities require space and imply movement, in particular the kite; finally, one could even go as far as to claim that as it is presented to the observer the scene resembles a stage, where every character performs his own role in perfect harmony with the rest of the group and with the surrounding space. Altogether, everything appears exceedingly moderate and measured.

This artificiality should not be ascribed to the limited cartooning skills of its author (who, for having gained a place on the back cover with this caricature may be deemed a semi-amateur), but rather to his precise intention to stress the primary condition that the scene implies and upon which the cartoon is built, that is to say the inescapable status of detainees that characterises its characters. In other words, the sense of witnessing an unnatural scene lies in the fact that the five men are not fully able to practice these activities since they do not

[28] Contrary to what one might expect, detainees who read newspapers are not a rarity in the cartoons; some examples will be mentioned in the following parts of this chapter.

find themselves at home, in an atelier, on a lake or sea shore, or in a park for real; by contrast, they can only "perform" them to some extent and with several limits, without fully enjoying the pleasure to which they would normally give rise would they actually be carried out in their proper environment.

Here a split between the fictional characters and the readership takes place, for while the former experience their activities as an appropriation of freedom, the latter understands them as an imitation, a performance of it, which allows the prisoners to get only a little taste, not to say the illusion of it. This two-fold understanding of freedom derives from multiple dichotomies that revolve around the main and most evident one, that is, cartoon protagonists versus readership, namely fiction versus reality, inside versus outside, and confinement versus liberty.

There is, however, an element in the cartoon that constitutes a *trait d'union* in each of these dichotomies, that is to say the presence of the man who pretends to be fishing, along with the words that he pronounces. It was already pointed out that his comment clarifies to the reader that the protagonists of the illustration are not simply killing time but trying to revive specific activities with the aim of feeling part of society despite their isolation; yet, it was not discussed whom these words are addressed to. Contrary to any expectation, the man does not address his cell mates while explaining "What [should] we do, bro', we try not to break off from society"; by contrast, he looks off in the direction of the observer, showing that his words are for us, the readership. Moreover, he also explicitly addresses the reader with the vocative expression *abi*, "bro'", thus totally breaking the traditional two-dimension of pictures.

This detail is absolutely crucial insofar as it constitutes a rare exception in *Gırgır*, where ways to address the readership were regularly adopted in the written appointments, for instance in the comments to the amateur cartoons or in the satirical announcements and fake news that were randomly disseminated throughout the magazine, but rarely in the columns dedicated to graphic satire. In this respect it is hard to establish how far the author, a semi-amateur, was conscious of the innovation that he brought to *Gırgır* by giving voice to a character that addresses the reader, but neither does this seem to be the main point. Rather, in the light of the fact that this feature constitutes a rarity that its author could not have learnt by observing the work of master cartoonists within the magazine, nor presumably by receiving written instructions in this sense by them, it is fair to assume that this element was a product of his own creativity. Consequently, the focal question is what is its specific meaning and function.

When it comes to this question the context in which the illustration was produced becomes an essential aspect to be evaluated, not least the fact that its author created it in jail. So we realise that if, as already explained on several occasions, prison cartoons bear witness to the jail experience of their authors, the information that may be derived from this scene is that the fictional prisoners represent the real ones who share the jail experience with the cartoonist and that during their daily life behind bars this prisoner-cartoonist and his cell mates were used to recreating specific activities.

Definitely, this is a conclusion that in the light of our familiarity with prison cartoons could have been reached also had the cartoon been realised without speaking characters, that is to say had the fisherman been portrayed simply in the act of performing his activity, without offering any verbal explanation; still, besides assuming that these activities merely represent a way to spend the long days in confinement, it would have been impossible to interpret the actual meaning that prisoners attribute to them. Here lies the major function of the words in the balloon, that is to say asserting that the cartoonist and his fellow prisoners dedicated their time to activities that belong to the world outside jail with the precise aim of feeling part of it.[29]

[29] As a matter of fact, the author of this illustration, Uğur Özakıncı, was not a fisherman but a university student of literature, cinema, and photography at the time he was arrested for political reasons in 1980 and forced to spend five and a half years in prison (after which he became a scriptwriter, poet and novelist). It might be supposed that fishing was his hobby prior to the arrest, but that activity could also have been chosen in the case of his *alter ego* randomly among the many outdoor occupations that may in no way be practiced in jail, like the other activities represented in the scene that contribute to stressing the limited freedom of which the characters benefit.
If a digression is allowed, having a panoramic look at the amateurs' and semi-amateurs' cartoons it is interesting to notice that several caricatures by Özakıncı were published in the 1980-1983 period both among the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* and on the back cover, and that contrary to the habit of *Gırgır*, in his case the passage from the former to the latter is not linear but alternate; that is to say that, for instance, while one of his illustrations earned a place on a back cover in November 1982, another one was published among the amateur ones in January 1983 (instead of waiting until it reached a back cover level, that Özakıncı had already proved being capable of with the cartoon previously published). According to the upward trajectory that used to elevate amateurs to the status of semi-amateurs and then, eventually, to that of professional cartoonists, this emerges as an exception that might be ascribed to *Gırgır* editors' will of publishing prison cartoons quicker than their "free" counterparts from time to time, presumably to facilitate communication with the outside in the case of prisoners-cartoonists whose arrest was particularly critical (say for their young age, for the length of their detention, for the modality of their confinement, etc.).
A further exception that emerges in Özakıncı's case is that his caricatures are often published with incorrect or missing information, for instance his surname is misspelled or the place of origin simply states "prison", without clarifying which one. A hypothesis could be that the publication of partial information responded to the will of protecting him from possible consequences by the hand of the prison authorities; however, this does not justify the fact that, conversely, on some occasions his name, surname and detention centre are mentioned with no mistakes nor missing parts, exposing him anyway, and, above all, it does not explain why this modality emerges only in the case of this prisoner. A more plausible explanation is that the generous quantity of cartoons that Özakıncı sent to the magazine exposed him to higher publication opportunities and, along with them, to a higher risk of printing mistakes.

However, as a matter of fact this goal could have been reached had the fisherman been addressing those words to any of his cell mates, in which case the reader would have learnt the same information indirectly (read by observing from outside the protagonist thinking out loud, without being involved in the first person) yet with the same efficiency. Thus, what lies behind the decision to let the speaking character address the reader directly?

The fisherman should be understood as the fictional *alter ego* of the cartoonist himself, for he, like him, is in jail, is showing a cross section of his cell life and is longing to establish direct contact with the world beyond the institution in which he is held. That contact is achieved both through those exact words pronounced loudly in the case of the former, and through the realisation and following publication of the cartoon when it comes to the latter. More correctly, the words that come out of the mouth of the fisherman are the element that ultimately allows not only himself but the cartoonist too to communicate; so finally, character and author merge into a single voice that transmits the same information to the same interlocutor, that is the same *Gırgır* readers who know by experience that by observing this illustration they get very close to witnessing the experience of its author.

To conclude, the fact that the speaking character addresses the observer should be understood as carrying out the function of allowing the cartoonist to project himself into the reality of freedom that the readers are able to enjoy, imagine to observe his own condition from their point of view, and explain them that he and his inmates are perfectly aware of the paradox and the artificiality of the situation, as well as of the fact that an imitation of freedom is no equivalent to being free; yet, they choose to "perform freedom" – not in search of an unattainable illusion of it but, conversely, as a way to get as close as possible to a reality of freedom that they perceive as their denied right. Ultimately, this is their strategy not to passively surrender to confinement.

Several cartoons of the period confirm that "performances of freedom" were illustrated, thus, supposedly previously witnessed and also enacted in other detention centres too, suggesting that the simulation of activities aimed at breaking the "inside-outside prison" dichotomy was perceived as a strategy of resistance more globally than a single illustration might reveal. Though generally built on less articulated and refined narratives than the one that was just examined, other cartoons of this *genre* distinguish themselves for shedding light on aspects peculiar to this strategy.

A couple of caricatures appear particularly interesting in this respect, especially when put in relation to each other. The two scenes in question (Fig. 51 and 52) were realised by the same author, detainee Mithat Solmaz from the prison of Afyon,[30] possibly in the same period as they were both published in September 1983, respectively on the back cover on the 4th and on the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* on the 18th.

The first one portrays a swimming race taking place in a prison cell, where three competitors are standing on three improvised springboards ready to race, supervised by an umpire and observed by a modest public made of two men who are betting on the possible winner. The same paradox that was detected in the previous illustration dominates this scene, that is to say the fact that every character seems to take the moment deeply seriously despite the impossibility to actually race due to their status of prisoners and, above all, to the absence of a swimming pool, that is replaced by three washtubs in which the racers are supposed to plunge.

The aquatic theme is central also to the second caricature, where a detainee complains to his inmate about his curiosity for the sea that inspires him too long "immersions" in a washtub that prevent himself from using said container to wash his clothes.

In both illustrations the inside-outside dichotomy is visually expressed by the washtub, a limited substitute of an Olympic swimming pool in the former and of the sea in the latter, which is only the most evident among the features that the two scenes have in common. Nonetheless, the washtub is, at the same time, at the centre of a substantial difference too, that is the fact that while it allows the simulation of a swimming race (made possible through the presence of one tub for each swimmer) that seems to generate harmony in the first context, it then becomes a source of discord in the second, where the protagonists wish to make use of it for different purposes (bathing, for one, and doing the laundry, for the other), thus individually.

Perhaps, moments of friction among cell mates might be closer to reality than one might be inclined to suppose while examining the rich corpus of prison cartoons, especially in the light of the fact that detainees were assigned to specific prison wings, corridors and cells according to the *karıştır-barışır* principle. Meaning "mix and make reconcile", this principle was based on the belief that by forcing together political prisoners who belonged to different, opposed and even enemy political groups their polarisation would dissolve. While the outcome of this principle in preventing political ferment and ideological beliefs in the long

[30] Illustrations realised by Solmaz in later times (for instance in 1985) locate him in the prison of Kütahya, indicating that he was move from the prison of Afyon to the penitentiary of the near town.

run is debatable, it is easy to imagine that in the context of the prison experience collective and group activities were successful in generating solidarity among inmates, thus inevitably shaping a general "detainee identity" in opposition to a global "authorities identity" that comprised the instigators of arrests and the positions responsible for prisoners' surveillance and punishment.

Especially once examined in a comparative perspective these two illustrations appear as pointing exactly at the benefits of solidarity, they exalt the collective dimension of the performances of freedom as a condition to turn them from simple routine activities into effective strategies of resistance, whereas individuality generates egoism, hence impossibility to carry on this behind-bars struggle (the living together issues of which the two men in the second scene are debating will hardly let them unite in favour of a common strategy of rebellion). United we resist, individually we fail, seems to be the motto of these caricatures, a message of which the cartoonist might be not fully aware, but that may not be neglected by the observer considering their thematic cross-references (water, the washtub), common author and temporal proximity.

Overall, the outdoor activities that we see reproduced in jail should be interpreted not as random hobbies simply conceived as ways among others to spend the long days of detention, but, conversely, as conscious attempts to preserve ties with physical liberties and the passing of time pertaining to the world outside jail. The representation of these activities in the cartoons, then, constitutes the last tile of the mosaic of resistance of these prisoner-cartoonists. That is to say, the drawing inmates revive their performances of freedom a second time by visually narrating them in cartoons which will then be published, thus ultimately creating a bridge with that world of freedom from which they are parted by a barbed wire fence.

Emotions

The accent on collectivity as a resource of solidarity and courage that was highlighted in the last analysis emerges also in the third group of cartoons dedicated to the realm of daily prison life, that is to say cartoons that reveal prisoners' feelings *vis-à-vis* their detention. In these illustrations detainees are often captured in small groups while chatting, reading newspapers and debating current affairs in their cells; through these cross sections of ordinary jail life the reader realises the emotions that distinguish them.

Before delving into the analysis of selected representatives of this group of cartoons, let us stress here again that, as already explained, custody could last up to six months, during which circulation of information concerning the development of steps that would lead to legal trials were anything but clear, making it impossible to know how long a person would be left in a detention centre before appearing in court. Trials themselves could last for months and this is what happened in the majority of the cases (trials under the regime went down in history for their endless duration), after which verdicts were likely to prolong detentions for extremely long timespans. Let it suffice to mention here some examples to convey the scale of the phenomenon: in the biggest judicial case involving the political right the trial of 587 suspect ultranationalists and MHP members lasted six years; on the left, the collective trial against *Devrimci Sol* (Revolutionary Left, DEV-SOL) came to an end after eleven years, and the one against the *Barış Derneği* (Peace Association) resulted in up to thirty years of detention.

Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the death penalty was still allowed by Turkey's judicial system at that time, and that in the above-mentioned processes alone 450 death sentences were requested (200 in the framework of the MHP trials and 250 to DEV-SOL members). The threat of death sentences burdened prisoners' sentiments with further apprehension and anguish, it is easy to imagine. The caricatures that put the reader face to face with detainees' feelings should be thus considered in this context of uncertainty and risk.

The vast array of emotions that mark the prison experience fall under two major categories, namely the "negative" feelings that unveil prisoners' difficulties in accepting their detainee status and the limited freedom that this implies, and the "positive" ones that reveal their determination to take said freedom back.

As far as the former is concerned, in a cartoon realised in the closed prison of Afyon, and that was published on the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page on January 3 1982 (Fig. 53), a man wishes good luck[31] to his cell mate who is about to appear in court. In the following scene, the latter is visibly upset and when a third mate asks for the reason for his mood the former explains that the man got a sentence of five years, which is the source of his discontent as "he thinks it is" (instead of just "it is") a heavy sentence.[32]

[31] He literally wishes him "nice trial" as he chooses *iyi mahkemeler...*, an expression that evokes familiarity with sentences and tribunals, to some extent like the colloquial *mapushane* stands for "prison" instead of *hapishane*.
[32] The complete explanation is, in translation: "he got five years, he thinks himself heavily sentenced".

Several elements emerge from this short dialogue: first, that for an ordinary man (whose innocence is not stated yet evidently implied) it is extremely difficult to accept a court decision even though (or, rather, perhaps exactly because) from a legal point of view it goes without saying that in the authoritarian context of the regime acceptance is the only possible choice; second, that it is hard to accept such a decision even though the detainee in question is presumably aware that his sentence is relatively light compared to the general trend; and, third, that during the regime a five-year sentence is universally recognised as routine to the extent that the other cell mates deem the disappointment of the convict to be exaggerated and treat his reaction with a subtle vein of sarcasm and, why not, envy. This attitude reveals that they expect, or probably already got heavier sentences than his.

In sum, the feelings that emerge in this cartoon are the condemned man's anger and his cell mates' envy, that ultimately serve the purpose of putting the individual cases of these fictional characters in relation to the wider context of real trials and actual sentences, to denounce the judicial fury of the regime.

The non-acceptance of imprisonment translates also into hope, in particular that detention will soon come to an end. As surprising as it might be, hope is here included in the so-called negative feelings as it often emerges as a desperate, sick sentiment that increases anguish rather than helping overcome it. In fact, the desire to get out of jail appears so urgent (especially in the light of the harsh conditions, that were recalled above), that hope often goes beyond the margins of rationality to become a true belief in a sometimes supernatural and always unexpected cause that will suddenly make release possible.

In a prison cartoon that appeared on the back cover of the magazine on November 7 1982 (Fig. 54), for instance, a detainee runs toward two cell mates waving a newspaper and enthusiastically announcing that "Forgiveness came out! Hurray[!]", as if he had just read some news concerning the discharge of prisoners; but he lately clarifies: "Forgiveness came out in the crosswords...", thus informing that no decision on prisoners has taken place and that the concept has only come out as an empty word in the crosswords. Still, the man is as excited as if a decision in this respect had really been approved, to the extent that his mates are visibly worried about his Quixotesque state of mind. The speaking character's longing to be elsewhere is so rooted in his mind that it has caused him to lose all common sense, and anything that recalls even a vague idea of freedom is perceived by him as a source of desperate hope in spite of the fact that the condition that has evoked freedom in this instance, that is to say the crosswords, is not sufficient for its realisation.

When the impossibility to achieve freedom becomes manifest, hope turns into anger, as another illustration highlights (Fig. 55). Similar to the previous one in context and themes,[33] this prison cartoon, which appeared on the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page on January 23 1983 presents a sequence that is initiated by a mouse that evokes in a group of detainees the possibility of their release.[34] In fact, he approaches their cell with a newspaper in his hands announcing: "Heey people come on you are rid of sleeping on the floor the newspaper writes [about] discharge". In the second scene the inmates have gathered around the newspaper and look for the awaited news with curiosity and suspense that progressively turn into apprehension as they cannot find it. Lastly, in the third scene the prisoners are angrily running after the mouse in order to catch and punish him for having made fun of them: "Help! I was joking... Help!" screams the little animal, while the men accuse him: "He mocked our feelings..." and "You deceived us, [you're] mean! The newspaper writes development discharge". The reaction of the men is unmistakably disproportionate and shows that freedom is too sensitive an issue to be allowed to make jokes about, as this means making fun of their strongest and deepest hopes, which appear to be all they are left with when it comes to the issue of release.

Anger, envy and unconditional hope reveal the fragility of these ordinary men, who have found themselves in jail all of a sudden and are not always psychologically ready to face the prison experience rationally. Patient and brave as they might be, freedom remains their most vivid desire.

Freedom stands at the core of the second category of "feelings cartoons" too, that is to say the ones that show a positive approach to detention. To a certain extent, many of the caricatures mentioned in this chapter, especially the ones dedicated to the identity of prisoners

[33] Here, too, we are faced with two illustrations realised by prisoners Özakıncı and Solmaz respectively that present strong similarities, as it is the case for some mice cartoons and as we have already experienced with the two caricatures on collective activities that were examined only a few pages above. The elaboration of so similar satirical codes, denunciations, political messages, scenes, witticism and issues to build caricatures around by these two amateurs is indeed astonishing and paves the way for hypotheses on some sort of common source of inspiration (beyond the prison experience itself that certainly presented common aspects for all detainees) or training path in the art of cartooning of which the two men might have benefited from jail. These could translate, say, into correspondence with the same professional cartoonists among the *Gırgır* staff who, willingly or not, might have transferred to them the same suggestions and ideas; however, this is only one way in which Özakıncı and Solmaz might have been subject to similar inputs. For instance, did any kind of communication, transfer and exchange among prisoners detained in different penitentiaries ever take place that bypassed the step of the *Gırgır* headquarters (beside the circulation of issues of the magazine)? These questions go beyond the focus of this work, for this reason they may not find an answer in these pages; yet, they provide questions for future research.

[34] This mouse who can speak, read newspapers and interact with prisoners is one among the multitude of humanised prison mice with which we have become acquainted in a previous section.

and to jail life, could be deemed part of this positive attitude as they show prisoners in the act of putting in practice strategies of resistance that prove that they are not surrendering to discomfort and fear. However, the scenes of intellectuals writing from their cells, of detainees patiently waiting for a volleyball net to materialise from the web of a spider, or of a group busy with the simulation of outdoor activities tell us more about the intellectual and political aspects of their detention than its emotional implications. In a different set on cartoons, conversely, these emotions come to the surface.

This happens, for instance, in a prison cartoon that appeared among the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* illustrations on October 9 1983 (Fig. 56). The view is on a section of the external wall of a prison that includes a corner with a window; outside the building a child stands with a bouquet of flowers in his hands which he raises towards the window in order to give it to a detainee, who is visible only by an arm that he has dangled through the iron bars. No balloon nor caption nor further detail is added to explain the moment.

Such an apparently simple scene actually discloses several feelings: to begin with, the detainee's absence of fear of transgressing the boundary between outside-happiness and inside-pain, that is embodied by the actual prison perimeter and walls; in the second place, his perception of such transgression as necessary in order to assert his own presence in a situation where power is trying to annihilate prisoners and make them "disappear". In other words, with that arm that transgresses the boundaries of the prison building the detainee is shouting to the world "I am alive! I do exist!" Moreover, a strong desire of normality, routine and the joy of everyday life takes shape through the search for physical contact with the outside. And to conclude, extreme tenderness both on the side of the child and of the detainee dominates the whole scene.

Regarding the last point, it should be pointed out that this illustration stands as a rare example of children's presence in the prison cartoons. In this specific case this presence suggests the impression that the child is actually the son of the prisoner and that in the impossibility to see each other properly they try their best to get a direct contact, no matter the risk that they run in so doing, in particular the father. The absence of further clues will let this impression unconfirmed; yet, this does not seem particularly relevant as the message conveyed by the presence of the child is achieved nonetheless.

The choice of the little boy (instead of an adult), symbol of innocence, who sweetly approaches the prison window with no trace of dread discloses that the person behind the wall is a trustable good-hearted person, thus innocent. The presence of such positive elements as the child and the flowers creates a visual contrast with the aridity of the external wall and with

the crudity of its iron bars, hinting that the detainee is not a criminal and he would plainly deserve to find himself elsewhere.

To conclude, fearlessness, desire to assert one's own presence, long for a normal life and sweetness are the feelings that filter through this scene, showing that constructive emotional responses to detention existed that gave prisoners the strength to face the jail experience holding their head up high, despite all the risks and uncertainties determined by the circumstances.

In conclusion, as it was introduced at the beginning of this section, jail routine emerges as the topic that is treated in the cartoons in the most homogeneous way. Having examined a wide array of caricatures dedicated to this topic by now, it is finally possible to attribute such homogeneity to a characteristic that was originally presented almost as a coincidence and that, instead, implies much more, that is to say the fact that the authors of these sketches were amateurs and semi-amateurs who drew from jail.

If we question the reason for the sharp preponderance of prisoners among these illustrators, presumably the answer is that professional cartoonists were not keen on portraying scenes of jail routine as this was a reality that they could not witness first hand nor learn from other media. Let us remember, in fact, that *Gırgır* was unique in giving voice to the victims of mass imprisonment in real time.

This hypothesis would match one of *Gırgır*'s main missions, that is to say, to be a vehicle of information that spread real news through cartoons that drew from actual current affairs. In other words, while it was relatively easy for its team of professional cartoonists to create, for example, a caricature about the unequal treatment of unionists and mafia men in front of the law following two judicial verdicts that had taken place for real, that were reported in the press and that somehow proved so, evident difficulties arose if the same cartoonists tried to represent the prison world from their work place at the headquarters of the magazine, where they could neither observe it nor "absorb" it from any other source.

The prisoner status of these cartoonists implies that, first, in the majority of the cases these illustrators had limited artistic skills which, deliberately or not, gave rise to common aesthetic patterns; hence their stylistic homogeneity. Second, it also implies that the scenes depicted in the cartoons were realistic reproductions of actual moments of jail life, which shows that individual experiences of detainees in different penitentiaries could share common traits. Third, these two implications also justify the less dominant presence (sometimes

absence) of witticism than in the cartoons that were realised by professionals – let it suffice to compare them with the irony and humour of the cartoons about mass imprisonment.

While the first and third points are self-explanatory, the second implication does not suffice to disclose the reasons for the homogeneity of contents, that is to say the high level of similarities in the ways chosen to represent jail problems (specifically in the so-called mice cartoons), activities (especially the outdoor hobbies) and feelings (in particular hope in unexpected releases). A tentative explanation could be that these similar patterns were the result of indirect contaminations that took place, perhaps unconsciously, by reading the magazine and having the opportunity to observe how other prisoners had chosen to narrate their experience. Besides, another hypothesis is that these similarities were much less casual and unconscious than the previous explanation considers and that, on the contrary, they responded to a common strategy of self-portrayal vis-à-vis power. If correct, this track would open a new breach in the study of the collective dimension of resistance that was made possible through *Gırgır*. The scope of this work does not allow us to dwell on this aspect but it is evident that, as already asserted, further investigation into cross-relations among prisoners-cartoonists all over the country emerges as an urgent task in order to fill the gap concerning the understanding of the strategies of resistance under the regime.

Moments that interrupt prison routine

Having sufficiently assessed the variety of caricatures that narrated prison routine, let us now turn to the second category of illustrations dedicated to jail life, that is to say the one focused on the moments that interrupted that routine, namely questioning and interrogations.

It is possible to assert that cartoons that belong to this category are entirely centred on one aspect in particular that characterised these moments: violence. It is in fact interesting to detect that no illustration exists in *Gırgır* that treats the topic differently, that is to say by insisting, for instance, on the array of questions that were submitted to the person examined, or on the relationship that interrogators tried to establish between one detainee and the other. By contrast, violence emerges as the *fil rouge* that guides all these witnesses.

The term witness is perhaps not the most suitable with regard to these cartoons insofar as, contrary to the trend that emerged in the previous section, the authors of these "violence cartoons" are never prisoners but rather professionals who worked for *Gırgır* permanently. It is thus legitimate to interrogate ourselves about the reasons for such opposed tendencies in the

two cases; in particular, why no trace of explicit scenes of jail violence realised by amateurs and semi-amateurs, free or imprisoned, is detectable?

As far as prisoners-cartoonists are concerned, the first evident explanation is to be found in the high risk that the realisation of cartoons of this kind would have implied for them. In all likelihood, detainees caught in the act of drawing or smuggling outside jail graphic depictions of violence would have been severely punished; and, in case the sketches managed to reach the magazine, the same risk would have been at play after their publication, since – let it be reminded once again – these illustrations (along with all the others made by amateurs and semi-amateurs that were chosen for publication) appeared in *Gırgır* with details about their authors that made them easily traceable.

That prison directors would have hampered the circulation of information related to critical moments of jail life, and punished any attempt in this sense, becomes manifest in the light of the recollections of Nuran Çamlı Maraşlı regarding from her detention in the prison of Diyarbakır during the years of military rule.[35] Maraşlı recalls that another inmate, a young thirteen-year-old girl called Meryem, once wrote a letter to her family in which she reported details of her prison experience, including, among other information, the fact that the officers in charge of the prison wing for women had cut her hair and that of the other detained women. According to Maraşlı's memoire the commanders brought the letter back to Meryem and forced her to eat it, shouting that she should not have dared to tell the outside world anything that took place inside. They then threateningly "reminded" her that it had been her own idea – as with the other women – to cut her hair short; had not it?

As a matter of fact, it is true that the humiliations and tortures that took place in the Diyarbakır prison are generally accepted to be different in modality and larger in scale than the violence that was experienced in other penitentiaries,[36] to the extent that the expression

[35] The episode is mentioned in Nuran Çamlı Maraşlı, "Diyarbekir Zındanında Kadın Olmak." *Bianet*, 2 July 2003 and narrated with more details in the interview that she released for the documentary movie *5 No'lu Cezaevi: 1980-1984*, directed by Çayan Demirel, produced by Ayşe Çetinbaş, photography by Koray Kesik, editing by Burak Dal, music by Ahmet Tirgil, Nizamettin Arıç, Serdar Can, 2009, Surela Film, Istanbul.

[36] The ethnic factor played a fundamental role in the conception of the Diyarbakır prison, in advertising it as a "boarding school" where people could voluntarily enrol, and in the discipline, activities and punishment that were promoted and inflicted in it. This military prison, built in the capital city of the region that appeared on the maps of the late-Ottoman empire as Kurdistan, land of the Kurds, was planned as a place in which to "erase" the Kurdish identity and "Turkify" its detainees through training and punishment. The sad record of ethnically motivated violence at the Diyarbakır prison, which had no equal elsewhere, was due exactly to the ethnic peculiarity of the region and to the predominant presence of Kurds in its cells. For detailed accounts of "the hell of Diyarbakır" (*Diyarbakır cehennemi*) see Welat Zeydanlıoğlu, "Torture and Turkification in the Diyarbakır Military Prison." in *Rights, Citizenship & Torture: Perspectives on Evil, Law and the State*, ed. Welat Zeydanlıoğlu and John T. Parry (Oxford, 2009) pp. 73-92, and the documentary movie *5 No'lu Cezaevi: 1980-1984*, directed by Çayan Demirel, produced by Ayşe Çetinbaş, photography by Koray Kesik, editing by Burak Dal, music by Ahmet Tirgil, Nizamettin Arıç, Serdar Can, 2009, Surela Film, Istanbul.

vahşet dönemi (the period of barbarity) was later coined to refer to what happened precisely there in the years 1981 to 1984; nevertheless, this witness lets us envisage that even though a punishment of this kind might have not been applied to prisoners elsewhere for similar "misdeeds", in all likelihood anyone who dared to denounce more violent practices than being forced to a haircut risked dangerous reactions in other detention centres too.[37]

In addition, a second reason for the absence of prisoners among the authors of the "violence cartoons" is to be attributed to the trauma that the experience of such violence caused to the people who had become its victims for real. It is generally argued that anyone who was subject to arrest and detention under the regime became acquainted with violence, either directly, that is to say at their own expense, or by witnessing the treatment to which other inmates were subject. It is easy to imagine that the elaboration of such trauma took several different paths that were predominantly far from immediatly sharing the humiliation that said violence had inflicted them; the latter eventually came to the surface in the long run, as part of a process of trauma elaboration and overcoming that took years to be realised and that eventually developed into written, oral and graphic accounts.

To sum up, it is fair to claim that although by taking up the art of cartooning as a weapon to denounce jail reality several prisoners proved that they did not lack bravery (as especially the prison cartoons that have emerged from the previous category confirm), practical concerns linked to their precarious safety, that was and remained in the hands of prison authorities, did not allow them to push their criticism to the level of explicit violence cartoons.

When it comes to non-imprisoned amateurs and semi-amateurs, their absence among the authors of violence cartoons is to be ascribed to reasons that do not differ much from the ones that were just elucidated regarding their detained counterparts. In fact, it may be claimed that, first, a certain risk was at play in the case of these amateurs too, though different in nature. In the majority of cases these authors were high school students, children of the lower middle class living in modest neighbourhoods of Istanbul and other big cities, in other words young ordinary people who might have decided to refrain from drawing explicit heavy accusations against the regime for fear of equally heavy repercussions in case they were caught by the police, be it for political reasons or randomly, given that arrests were daily events.

[37] Once more, witnesses of this kind let us fully understand how hazardous, hence brave, was any effort to draw and send sketches from prison in general, no matter how explicit the political stake of their content.

Second, the "trauma factor" should not be disregarded in this case, too, as the existence of prison violence was known to the population. True, this was being whispered (through alternative means of information circulated underground) rather than told loudly, since denounces in this sense were obviously omitted by state-controlled media and largely hampered in independent ones; yet, despite all efforts of the regime to obstruct the spread of "black news", recurrence to violence and its perpetuation as a systematic phenomenon was known way beyond underground political environments also before seeing its marks on the physical and mental status of released relatives and friends. In the end, prison violence was a collective trauma that crossed the actual moments and places where it was perpetuated, to finally involve civil society as a whole; it is thus understandable that, according to free amateurs and semi-amateurs too, the times were not yet ready to create humour out of it.

A third, obvious, reason is free amateurs' and semi-amateurs' impossibility to witness or experience episodes of prison violence in the first person. It is true that, as just stated, civil society was aware of this violence; however this does not necessarily mean that it was familiar with its practices to an extent that could make possible the realisation of cartoons about it. It is also true that, as Gilles Dorronsoro remarks,[38] hundreds of thousands of people were acquainted with this violence as a consequence of the fact that at least one close relative or friend of theirs had experienced it first-hand. In this case, however, it is plausible that aspiring cartoonists who could have drawn inspiration from the experiences of their beloved refrained from exploiting them for the sake of political satire for two reasons, either for practical difficulties derived from the fact that the latter were still detained, or for respect for their privacy and of their (often long-lasting) efforts to overcome this trauma. In addition, a further factor at play was their own need to accept the dark reality which the accounts of their beloved put them face to face with, that contributed to that collective trauma whose reference was made above.

Here a doubt could arise regarding the eventuality that violence cartoons were sent to *Gırgır* by amateurs and semi-amateurs on some occasions, and that Aral turned down their publication in order to avoid the risk of dangerous backlashes against their authors. If this were the case, however sporadic traces of these caricatures would have certainly emerged in the comments without illustration that were frequent in the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler*, that is to say those comments written by the staff that singled out no visible illustration in

[38] Gilles Dorronsoro, "La torture discrète: capital social, radicalisation et désengagement militant dans un régime sécuritaire," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* No. 8, (2008): paragraph 21.

particular and that, instead, gave tips to specific non-professional cartoonists, gave general advices on themes and methods, thanked the director of a prison for letting drawing material reach a prisoner, or praised another one to do so. In a typical *Gırgır* fashion, comments addressed to eventual non-professional authors of violence cartoons in this space would have certainly praised their work, probably acknowledged that it was not the right time to publish them and encouraged them to pursue their art in this sense nevertheless. By contrast, no such comment is detectable, along with no other hint of amateur and semi-amateur cartoons about prison violence, from which it is possible to conclude that they were not a case in point, except, perhaps, on extremely rare occasions.[39]

In brief, violence cartoons always found room in the pages and columns of *Gırgır* that were curated by its permanent staff; thus, let us repeat it for the sake of clarity, unlike the reproductions of jail routine these illustrations did not draw from direct witnesses. On this point, and specifically on the reliability of these scenes, it is fair to argue that given the external view with which professionals were forced to approach the issue, a completely true reproduction of moments of violence could not be a priority, and that in the impossibility of investigating actual dynamics inherent in the prison experience that could result in reproductions as realistic as the ones of, for example, little stones in the food, simulations of swimming races and detainees' psychological fragility offered by prisoners themselves, in this case cartoonists had no other option but to insist on the existence of prison violence *per se* rather than on exact details about how this was perpetrated. Their effort thus consisted in drawing inspiration from the news that circulated on the matter[40] and elaborating their own graphic interpretations according to their personal satirical vein and style.

While investigating the reasons for inverted trends regarding the presence and absence of amateurs and semi-amateurs in prison routine and violence cartoons respectively, another question implicitly emerged, symmetrical to this one, whose discussion becomes pressing at

[39] As a matter of fact, a few illustrations that could be attributed to this genre appear in the *İcerden Dışarıya Sevgilerle 24 Hapisaneden Karikatürler* catalogue. None of them actually depicts explicit scenes of violence, yet they make allusions to the danger that people run once they are arrested, as well as to the violence, especially of psychological nature, to which they are subject. Unfortunately, it is not possible to trace their dates of realisation and of submission to *Gırgır*; but in the light of the considerations outlined in the main text concerning risk, danger and trauma, there are strong reasons to believe that they belong to the second phase that the catalogue covers, that is to say the one that starts with the end of the regime and ends in 1986 with the opening of the exhibition (and related publication of its book).

[40] As explained above, such news was "whispered"; moreover, the debate on the issue that took place at international level should not be underestimated, especially as international humanitarian organisations loudly denounced the practice and there is no reason to doubt that informed intellectuals such as these cartoonists, who, from a professional point of view had a solid and established international network (developed through international cartoon contexts, exhibitions and speeches abroad) had access to this information notwithstanding the strict control that the junta struggled to impose on the circulation of news.

this point. This concerns the reasons that push professional cartoonists to undertake the reproduction of scenes of violence although they had no direct experience of it, as argued at the end of the previous section, the same impossibility of witnessing detention refrained them from the representation of moments of jail routine.

The roots of this inconsistency may be found in professional cartoonists' wish to promote prison cartoons not necessarily to present to the public an authentic reproduction of life behind bars, rather with the aim of shedding light on its darkest side: the use and abuse of violence. For, the reproduction in a satirical key of scenes inspired by not only reliable but also accurate sources was indeed a priority of the magazine (as it was reminded while discussing the absence of professional cartoonists among the authors of jail routine cartoons), but not the only one, and in the case of a crucial matter like prison violence it is understandable that the lack of precise information on the topic was not deemed a reason strong enough to renounce making satire out of it all the same. To put it simply, given the unfeasible authentic and correct reproduction of dynamics of prison violence, to portray said violence anyway in order to make it resonate, no matter if with more imaginative tones than realistic ones, emerged as the mission of the *Gırgır* team.

This brings us back once again to the issue of missing jail routine sketches made by the hand of professional cartoonists, as in the light of what was just said it emerges that the absence of professionals among the authors of these illustrations should be attributed not only to their physical distance from that reality and consequent impossibility to witness it directly, as discussed in the previous section, but, evidently, also to a limited interest in focusing on issues that that category allowed to highlight, like, say, the non-respect of minimum hygienic standards in police stations and prisons. In fact, even though the analysis has shown that satirical representations of problems, activities and feelings that characterised the monotony of the jail experience allowed their (imprisoned) authors to express their personal ideological and political struggle, besides denouncing the treatment and conditions to which they were subject, it is plausible that these were deemed "minor" topics by official cartoonists insofar as prisoners too were able to elaborate on them.

This is not to say that professionals held the work of amateurs and semi-amateurs in low esteem; quite the opposite, they entrusted to them the narration of these aspects, while those among the former who were devoted to the criticism of the most authoritarian aspects of the military rule presumably decided to push the limits of their satire as far as possible, so to a margin of provocation and explicitness that was obviously more hazardous than the one of

prisoners, given their "freedom" vis-à-vis the state[41]. In other words, in the economy of *Gırgır*'s structure and satire it was not worth having professional cartoonists engaged in aspects of detention that prisoners-cartoonists proved able to visually narrate and denounce by their own hand, whereas, by contrast, in the light of the high risk that the production of explicit scenes of violence would have implied for the latter, the permanent staff of the magazine decided to undertake this task themselves, in the name of potential prisoners-cartoonists who, for the reasons elucidated above, were unable to speak out anyway.

Doubtlessly, also in this case violence cartoons carried a high level of risk, for single professional cartoonists as well as for the magazine as a whole; yet, it may be claimed that the staff of *Gırgır* adopted this policy as a mission, inspired by a sense of responsibility toward the high number of victims of violence behind bars. After all, this matched with the political line that had guided the magazine since the mid-1970s, as we already know,[42] that is the one of making satire in the name of the masses and of victims, meant in its widest meaning: of the political system, of the socio-economic transformation of the country, and, in this case, of the repressive rule.

A final remark on the differences between cartoons dedicated to jail routine and the ones that portray the moments that broke that routine will guide us toward the analysis of a sample of the latter. This remark concerns the unequal presence of humour in the two categories, which translates into the cartoons of the second category carrying a stronger humorous element than their former counterpart. Indeed, it might appear unusual that these cartoons, which we have already renamed violence cartoons in the light of the precise aspect that they mean to denounce, present a stronger comic vein than their jail routine counterpart in spite of the heavier weight of their accusations and heavier content of their scenes. However, what initially emerges as a paradox finds a logical and reasonable explanation in the light of the dynamics of production of these cartoons that were discussed in the previous pages.

In fact, on the one hand, the mechanism that led to their creation, that foresaw no direct witness but only "half-smuggled" pieces of news to draw inspiration from, required the elaboration of an imaginative narrative in order to make the caricature appealing. On the other hand, the goal that guided the elaboration of these illustrations, that is the one of making the reader aware of the existence of violence as an actual practice, urged cartoonists to contrive brilliant satirical devices that had the power to affect the readership beyond the instant laugh

[41] However precarious in the repressive climate of the regime, the liberty of reaching the headquarters of the magazine where to create caricatures on a number of delicate political issues every day was after all freedom, compared to the status and limits that conditioned the elaboration of satirical sketches by prisoners-cartoonists.
[42] See Chapter 2.

that the humour of the scene could generate at first glance. In other words, the unfavourable initial position of these cartoonists (unfavourable in comparison with actual prisoners from the point of view of their familiarity with the jail reality, certainly not politically speaking), along with their ambitious aim, demanded a stronger and sharper satirical accent than the sketches about jail routine that prisoners undertook in order to share their experiences with the readership; hence, the prominent witticism of the illustrations that belong to the second category.

Yet, finally, the successful response of cartoonists of this category to the limits and needs imposed by the dynamics of production of their caricatures, thus the unequal presence of witticism, is ultimately rooted in the great essential difference that characterises the two, that is to say the difference between their authors' degree of familiarity with cartoons. To put it simply, it is the status of professional of the authors of the second category, masters of advanced knowledge and expertise in the art of graphic satire (that significantly differs from the elementary and intermediate level of amateurs and semi-amateurs) that, to begin with, provides them with the theoretical knowledge necessary to activate the above-mentioned mechanism; then, equips them with the technical skills required to accomplish the related goal; and, lastly, allows them to elaborate an extremely keen satire around such a delicate issue as state violence.

Violence

Let us now delve into this acute satire and discern the patterns along which the issue of prison violence was denounced in *Gırgır*. In a cartoon that belongs to Sarkis Paçacı's column of June 7 1981 (Fig. 57) two men face each other in the darkness of a narrow room, one is sitting on a short stool while the other stands next to him. The view of the latter is restricted by the thick darkness that shrouds the surroundings, which makes his face unrecognisable and that is cut only by a ray of light emanating from above by a lamp, that is unequivocally pointed at the former.

No matter the lack of captions in this respect, it becomes immediately clear to the observer that the scene reproduces an interrogation, which is probably taking place in the basement of a police station and that sees as protagonists a commissioner in plain clothes and one of his random "victims" – a definition, the latter, that is attributed not on principle but on the basis of the development of the events as they are narrated in the graphic sequence. In

fact, even though in the first scene the interrogator orders the detainee to “Speak!”, his reaction to the answer “I am innocent!” is to countermand “Don’t speak!”, combined with a punch on the face of the latter that is given with so much energy that he is hurled against the floor.

The whole situation is clearly aimed at intimidating the questioned person through a series of well-planned psychological stratagems; namely, first, the dominating position of the examiner, who deliberately stands while the other character is forced into a sitting position; second, the reduction of physical distance between the two as the former stands extremely close to the latter, to the extent that he needs not to move in order to hit him; and, third, the plausible absence of windows or, anyway, the artificial darkness that is created in the room beyond the bulb that enlightens the examined man specifically, that makes it impossible for him to see the face of his interlocutor, stare at him in the eyes, understand if other people too are present, and having a realistic perception of the passing of time.

Here the reader is put face to face with the typical dynamics that generally characterise interrogations, where an apparent spontaneity in the organisation of space and action within the interrogation room actually conceals carefully arranged details aimed at instilling a sense of disorientation and fear in the person under examination. That is to say, the combination of sparse interiors, neutral and minimal furniture and, not least, the posture and attitude of interrogators contribute to an unconscious perception of danger, they emphasise the presence of a threat that becomes more realistic and tangible the more the session moves forward. This climate of insecurity is aimed at generating fear, with the final objective being to push the respondent toward a confession in the shortest possible time, which may be said to correspond to the longest time that his or her nerves can bear such pressure.

The scope of this analysis does not allow us to engage in a debate that is certainly of primary importance in the general discussion on interrogation practices and techniques, that is to say the one regarding the efficacy of this method (let alone its ethical implications) in the case of the thousands of interrogations that were carried out under the regime (but the same debate would be valid for interrogations in any country and historical periods); therefore, any concern about the truthfulness of confessions that are extracted under intimidations and various kinds of pressure, hence their utility too, will be left for other occasions. Instead, let us discuss the elements that actually emerge from the caricature.

Power abuse and recurrence to violence during interrogations are the major issues that the caricature evidently aims at denouncing. This denounce presents a rich variety of nuances and is initially articulated along two narrative lines. The first centres on the man who is

subject to the interrogation and clearly points at his bravery. This is conveyed through a climax of three elements that at first impression might appear as obvious narrative choices but that actually are not.

The first consists in the fact that despite the threatening setting, frightening situation and intimidating presence of the commissioner, which carry all the implications that were just discussed, the author makes the character speak without hesitation, that is to say without including, for instance, a previous first scene in which he appears hesitating, sweating, trembling or panicking, in a word frightened. Quite the opposite, the interrogated man immediately replies to the order to speak – a reaction that should not be taken for granted in the given situation.

Second, the prompt answer is given with an absolutely self-confident and firm voice, as it is made clear in the written balloon by the presence of the exclamation mark.

Last but not least, the man does not hesitate to behave in a way that is in complete contrast with the expectations of his interlocutor. Better said, what he formally does is to obey his request; however, as a matter of fact, he surprises him with a challenge, which is an answer that neatly contrasts with what the other tries to achieve. Overall, notwithstanding the precarious situation, the questioned man manifests a total lack of fear.

In the commissioner's reaction to the man's declaration lies the second aspect of the illustration, which is dedicated to the formers' behaviour and methods. Like the praise of the examined man's courage, the condemnation of his interlocutor, too, is achieved through a climax, that in this case acquires negative connotations and is built upon a sequence of failures and mistakes that he commits. That is to say, the reader is put face to face with a representative of authority whose single goal in this scene is to obtain a confession, that could consist of the release of a set of information or, also, simply of a declaration of guilt.

At first glance this goal appears extremely easy to achieve given the advantaged position of the questioner that is determined in part by his institutional role and in part by the above-mentioned details that characterise the room and the encounter between the two, that are meant to intimidate the victim and thus are totally in his favour. However, something goes wrong and the examined man gives an answer that breaks the expectations of the interrogator at their very roots, as they leave no margin for enquiry neither in the sense of an admission of involvement into something illicit nor, least of all, to obtain any sort of information. This is indeed a disappointing situation for the examiner, which marks his first failure against his victim.

Facing this first failure, the most natural action that the observer could expect in the following scene is a repetition of the same question, perhaps reformulated with different words, even with more altered tones, but certainly not a sudden change of attitude and consequent opposite order like the one that is enacted by our character. His angry reaction unmistakably suggests that the answer of his victim has come plainly unexpected to him, to the extent that it has made him lose self-control. However, surprise should be the less appropriate feeling in this case insofar as, by contrast, declarations of innocence are conceivably the most popular answers with which people under interrogation start to defend themselves, innocent and less innocent alike.[43] Thus, in the incapacity to foresee this answer doubtlessly lies his second failure.

The reaction that is combined to the interrogator's anger, both at verbal and physical level, stands as his third failure. This claim is made on the basis of the result that the verbal and the physical attacks generate. That is to say that the order to shut up, that is supposed to make the victim speak no more, clearly clashes with the actual objective to make him confess something. In addition, to strengthen this paradox comes the violent punch with which the latter is hit, that makes him fall on the floor definitely precluding any opportunity for him to reveal any kind of information in the short run. It is the examiner's loss of self-control that ultimately hinders his own objective to reach a confession. Altogether, considering that this is the main and sole goal of the interrogation, the aggressive behaviour of the commissioner results in a total failure that shows his incapacity, inadequate temper control and lack of professionalism in his job (besides obviously raising ethical concerns).

The confrontation between the two characters sees, on the one hand, a commissioner who is neither professional nor clever, whose sudden change of goal during the interrogation appears illogical and unexpected to the reader to the extent that it is exactly this turn that conveys the typical humorous touch of professional satire to this scene, notwithstanding the drama of the situation. Despite all, his inefficiency is comic – transforming him from a dreaded representative of institutions into a ridiculous man.

On the other hand, the confrontation sees a man who is totally undefended in the hands of the authorities, whose only weapon to oppose them is his conscience, which gives him the necessary self-confidence and strength that the harsh circumstances of the interrogation

[43] The examined man's innocence is not in doubt in this illustration as the dynamics of the interrogation and the way it is visually narrated here puts him into an unquestioned position of violated victim who is therefore innocent and who, even in the opposite case, would become so from the confrontation with his co-protagonist. Although this is stating the obvious, let us clarify that a status of guilt would not justify the officer's loss of control anyway.

demand to deny any guilt. To put it simply, what allows him to firmly proclaim himself innocent is his actual fairness. In this respect, this character presents a strong similarity with the imprisoned intellectuals and artists who are depicted in other cartoons in the act of carrying out their activities in jail despite the danger that they run in so doing, and for whom representations of this kind carry a strong political meaning that clearly goes further than the mere killing of time by focusing on their own occupation, as it was already debated. In the case of our protagonist, the proclamation of innocence represents a way to assert his own intellectual freedom and, willingly or not, his political stand against the regime. To sum up this point, as it was previously remarked for several caricatures, this illustration also presents a dual message that is not only centred on the accusation of the regime but also on paying a tribute to the moral, intellectual and political values of its victims.

The political reading of the scene is not limited to that. The elaboration of the specular climaxes that were elucidated is clearly aimed at building a contrast between the two characters; nevertheless, the reader should not be misled into deeming the confrontation between the protagonists the sole and final message of the illustration. Rather, these crossed narrative trajectories are a step whose function is to shed light on a more general dynamic, which constitutes the final point of the cartoon.

The two aspects contribute to generate the paradox of a commissioner who manages to perform a series of failures despite his unmistakably advantaged position facing the examined man. Besides putting him in a ridiculous light, the negative outcome of his performance, which is astonishing given the conditions in which the confrontation takes place, raises suspicions regarding a further meaning beyond that of a simple series of false steps, and leads toward a question that goes beyond the mere confrontation between these two protagonists. That is, what is the sense of the interrogators behaviour?

The surprising contradiction between the two orders that the latter issues within a few seconds, which precludes any understanding of what he actually expects from the interrogated man, along with his anger and violence, raise strong doubts regarding his commitment to extracting information. By contrast, it emerges as a plausible explanation that he is looking for a pretext whatsoever to hit his victim. In fact, it was perhaps not stressed enough so far that he is not portrayed in the act of asking a specific question but rather while giving a general order to speak, from which we may suppose that any answer is likely to be treated as the wrong one that will earn the victim a dose of violence.

Moreover, if a specific question is to be deciphered behind the blurred command to speak, this would be perhaps a confession of involvement into some organization that the

regime does not tolerate, to put it simply an admission of guilt, to which the commissioner would certainly react with violence. At the same time, in this respect the scene proves that the opposite claim, too, that is to say a declaration of innocence, leads to the same result. In brief, no matter the answers, it will always be welcomed with violence.

In conclusion, it is possible to assert that this cartoon stands as a stylised and standardised representation of the violence that was at play in interrogation rooms. Such was the mechanism of questioning that innocent victims with nothing to confess were beaten and subject to different forms of violence until they confessed to something, anything, exasperated, in which case they were punished again, and possibly more vehemently, for having stated the wrong thing. Violence was at the same time a means and an end, the boundaries between the two faded in the dark basements of police stations: to punish in order to extort confessions that will allow to punish again, this was the psychology of the totally unjustified[44] and despicable violence to which hundreds of thousands of people were subject under the regime. Ultimately, the confrontation between the two characters in the cartoon is also the one between the two groups that they represent; the heroic interrogated man who yields to the ridiculous yet cruel interrogator stands for brave innocent victims against those who sadistically abuse power, for civil society against the authoritarian power, one could go as far as saying for good against evil.

With this cartoon we became acquainted with the presence of violence during the questioning and interrogations that used to break the routine of detainees. With the multi-layered criticism that the illustration puts forward, its author introduced us not only to the mere recurrence to violence against the examined people but also to the fact that this violence did not simply have its roots in the temper of the interrogators but, on the contrary, was an established practice that characterised these sessions as much as the questions themselves. As a matter of fact, the borderline between spontaneous and systematic violence was not at all clear during the regime, for even if an individual inclination to recur to harsh methods against detainees was presumably the final element that allowed its realisation, the fact that the settings of said violence were state buildings, along with the large scale of the phenomenon, leaves little doubt concerning the involvement of the military government in these practices.

[44] By defining this violence as unjustified the author does not imply that there are other forms that are, conversely, justified; the adjective is used to mark the absolute absence of "human" concerns and lack of roots that could explain this practice beyond the wish to humiliate the victims and nullify their psychology facing the authorities.

That is to say that the first and major agent of the violence that was perpetrated in police stations and prisons in those years was the state, that then obviously delegated the practice with its nuances and details to the temper and "spontaneous behaviour" of single people or groups that preside over the detention centres. And the proper name for this violence ordained from above is, unmistakably, torture.

Torture

A posteriori, in an interview released fifteen years after the end of the regime (and nine years after the end of his mandate as president of the republic, his last political appointment) Evren commented that torture "olmuş olabilir", "it can be" that it was practiced, though rejecting accusations of complicity by affirming that the executive never gave instructions in this sense, and that sporadic episodes of torture might have been registered exactly as it might happen in "normal" times.[45] In fact, the retired general and the rest of the 1980-1983 administration never admitted their responsibility, nor that torture became an integral part of the detention experience under their government, in particular in the immediate aftermath of arrests; however, the denounces and witnesses of its victims tell a completely different story: to give an idea of the sharp contrast between Evren's distant admission of "it might have been" and the data that progressively emerged after the end of the military triennium, let it suffice to underline that Turkey's Association for Human Rights estimates that the number of detainees who lost their life as a result of torture during detention under the regime reached five hundred.[46]

At this point it is appropriate to make clear that the 1980 coup certainly did not mark the dawn of torture against political prisoners in Turkey and that, if we consider the phenomenon in a broader temporal perspective, there is no doubt that it was the political decade inaugurated by the 1971 coup that actually systematised the persecution of the Left

[45] The interview appeared in the documentary series *12 Eylül*, directed by Mustafa Ünlü, produced by Ali İnandım, presented by Mehmet Ali Birand, scenario by Hikmet Bila and Rıdvan Akar, music by Emrah Özdemir, Barbara Degener, Michael Sapp, tot. 9 episodes, 1998, Gala Film, Istanbul. Regarding this declaration it is interesting to notice also that Evren defines "normal" as the times when a country is governed according to a democratic system, implicitly suggesting that his military government did not represent a ruling system that may be considered generally suitable, or feasible in the long run. That first of all the junta considered their rise to power as an exception driven by the state of emergency of the country is not an unknown circumstance; yet, the language chosen by Evren here is worthy of notice.

[46] I Imset, 'The PKK: Terrorists or Freedom Fighters?' International Journal of Kurdish Studies, vol. 10, no. 1/2, 1996, p. 60.

and violence against the people arrested on the ground of political accusations. What emerged with the 1980-1983 rule, though, is the systematisation of a new model of violence, that was not necessarily aimed at extracting information and confessions but rather dictated by a more subtle, invisible and long-running objective, that is the one of re-affirming by means of humiliation and punishment the hegemony of the state over the people.

A pillar in the guidance of the nation since the foundation of the modern republic, this superiority had always manifested through – or, would it be more appropriate to say, on the contrary, concealed under? – the guise of a family man that first of all Atatürk had taken on while leading the young nation, and that, in the often so-defined "spiritual emptiness" that the founder of the republic left over, was inherited not by the single leaders who followed but rather by the establishment as a whole, civil and military institutions together.[47] In the late 1960s this role was questioned by the revolutionary wave to which Turkish students and the working class gave rise, inspired by the May 1968 events in France, that in its rejection of traditionalism (along with capitalism and imperialism) sanctioned a sharp generation gap from the dominating patriarchal model of the past; in fact, by the 1970s the rebellious children did not recognise the hegemony of the old guard anymore, the one of their fathers as much as the one of the "fathers" of the nation.

What the disproportionate state violence of the 1980-1983 regime meant to restore, then, was exactly this hegemony. As Dorronsoro skilfully elucidates in his article - already quoted above, in the eyes of the junta torture became the cure to reorganise weakened institutions, a "cheap and fast" mean to re-establish distance between them and the people in order to re-affirm the authority of the state; in this viewpoint, it should not be surprising to detect that, as he points out in the same article, torture against prisoners was actually systematic, little concern was shown to hide its effects, and international warnings on this matter were ignored.[48]

Authority based on violence and fear, then. An effort to categorise different forms of violence would probably be pointless; nevertheless, if a scale of gravity may be roughly imagined, its lowest peaks could be identified with the immediate and to a certain extent spontaneous force that newly arrested people suffered at the discretion of the single policemen and military officers of any rank with which they inevitably had to interface as

[47] It will be as late as the early 2000s, with the political escalation of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, that Turkey will be governed again by a leader who addresses the nation with paternalistic tones, though the "children" who will constitute his audience and electorate will match a different intellectual, political and socio-economic profile.
[48] Gilles Dorronsoro, "La torture discrète: capital social, radicalisation et désengagement militant dans un régime sécuritaire," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* No. 8, (2008), in particular paragraphs 11 and 22.

soon as they were arrested. On the other hand, the most sophisticated techniques of torture that were carefully planned and put into practice during interrogations certainly occupy the highest level of this imagined scale.

Indeed, a wide spectrum of techniques filled the gap between these two extremes, yet the point of this paragraph is not to differentiate them; by contrast, this is to claim that whatever the different methods, objectives and psychological tactics that came into play and that could eventually make some difference among punching arrested people on their way to the police stations, waking up prisoners in the middle of the night for the mere "pleasure" of beating them, or hanging them by the arms during interrogations, these (and many more) methods were all united by the same gravity, inhumanity and hatred.

In this respect, let us recall the sad episode that involved the Erdost brothers, Muzaffer, writer and owner of the publishing house Sol (Left), and İlhan, publisher for the latter, who were put under arrest on November 7 1980 under the accusation of printing books that were included in the black list of forbidden titles drafted by the junta. According to reconstructions of the events that were provided by newspapers that paid homage to the two brothers on several occasions in retrospect and, not least, to the memoirs of Muzaffer Erdost, on the day of their arrest the brothers were taken to the Mamak prison of Ankara and forced into a car to cover the distance of about 200 meters that divided Block A from Block C, to which they were destined. Once in the military vehicle, this short transfer which should have lasted only a few seconds was prolonged for approximately half an hour, during which the two brothers were exposed to repeated and severe beating by four soldiers; moreover, the session of violence was only briefly interrupted to restart again after reaching the block of destination. As Muzaffer recalled years later, "... we were beaten by two men each ... so brutally that I could barely breathe ... İlhan was lying on the floor ... his face covered in blood ... we looked at each other, he said that he did not feel good, that he was about to throw up ... they tried to make him stand up but he fell down again ... I called him ... İlhan, İlhan ... but İlhan did not reply anymore ...".[49]

The tragic outcome of the Erdost brothers' arrest clearly proves that even the less orchestrated forms of violence could make victims as much as the most sophisticated techniques of torture; as a consequence, not only would a distinction among them be useless to our argumentation but it would also risk to pave the way to a dangerous implicit tolerance –

[49] Muzaffer İlhan Erdost in an interview for the documentary series *12 Eylül*, directed by Mustafa Ünlü, produced by Ali İnandım, presented by Mehmet Ali Birand, scenario by Hikmet Bila and Rıdvan Akar, music by Emrah Özdemir, Barbara Degener, Michael Sapp, tot. 9 episodes, 1998, Gala Film, Istanbul. After his brother's killing, Muzaffer adopted the name "Muzaffer İlhan" to pay homage to him, and he is currently called so.

though partial and unconscious – of some forms of violence in comparison to others. Without following a specific order or scale, then, let us mention here a sample of tortures that were inflicted on detainees under the regime, which is necessary to understand the level of barbarity that was reached in those years.

It was already stated that the prison of Diyarbakır stands as an exceptional case of brutality that apparently had no equal in the rest of the country; yet, it is here chosen to elucidate some methods of torture that were applied exactly there, to be able to reflect on the scale of atrocity that several detainees came to experience. In a passage from the already-quoted article by Zeydanlıoğlu,[50] based on direct testimony by ex-detainees the author writes:

> "Although it is impossible to list all the methods of torture that were used, testimonies reveal that among the most common practices were: severe and systematic beating, pulling of hair, being stripped naked, being blindfolded and hosed, solitary confinement, guards' insults, constant and relentless surveillance and intimidation, death threats, the obligation to salute Captain Esat Oktay Yıldıran's dog, a German shepherd called "Jo", which was trained to bite the private parts of naked prisoners, sleep, sensory, water and food deprivation for extensive periods, *falaka* (beating of the soles of feet), "Palestinian hangings" (hanging by the arms), stress positions or forcing prisoners to stand for long durations, excessive exercise in extreme temperatures, stretching, squeezing or crushing of limbs and genitalia, piling of naked prisoners on top of each other, asphyxia and mock execution, electric shocks (specifically electrodes attached to genitals), burning with cigarettes, extraction of nails and healthy teeth, forcing prisoners to mix with prisoners with tuberculosis, sexual humiliation and assault, rectal examinations, forcing prisoners to beat/sexually humiliate/rape or urinate on each other, rape or threat of rape of prisoners, or relatives of prisoners in their presence by prison guards, violent forcing of truncheon rectally, forced feeding of rotten/contaminated food or faeces, baths in prison sewers (referred to as "the disco" by the guards)."[51]

Having become acquainted with this sadly enormous variety of techniques, let us now turn to the caricatures through which *Gırgır* explicitly condemned these corporal punishments. Looking at the whole sample of "torture cartoons" it emerges that electric

[50] Welat Zeydanlıoğlu, "Torture and Turkification in the Diyarbakır Military Prison." in *Rights, Citizenship & Torture: Perspectives on Evil, Law and the State*, ed. Welat Zeydanlıoğlu and John T. Parry (Oxford, 2009) p. 80.
[51] The author also declares that specific methods of torture were elaborated for women, too.

shock-torture and *falaka* (the practice of beating the soles of bare feet) predominate in terms of most frequently represented methods; indeed, it is no exaggeration to affirm that they are almost the *only* two forms of torture that appear in the sketches. This is surprising in light of the long list of violent methods that were used against detainees; all the same, a number of considerations can explain why this might be the case.

The first is "practical" and consists in the fact that these two punishments actually were the most commonly practiced punishments. In all likelihood, what made them more "popular" than the others in the eyes of police and military officers was their practicality, given that they were quick and easy to implement against newly arrived prisoners, whereas other forms of torture like for instance mock executions required longer preparations and setting up, or longer time spans as in the case of sleep, food and water deprivation.

The fact that these were the most extensively practiced forms of torture unavoidably implies that they also became the most currently debated, both through the direct experience of released victims and in the sphere of alternative and underground media, two vehicles of information which certainly made them the most familiar to civil society and to cartoonists; hence their multiple representations in the cartoons. In addition, the fact they were the most currently applied corporal punishment turned them into the two utmost representatives of all violence meted out on prisoners' bodies, in the imagination of the people and at the same time in the cartoons. In sum, given their dominance in real life, the reflection of their popularity in the cartoons is not surprising.

The second reason for their recurrence in the cartoons may be deemed ethical. As it becomes clear from the list elucidated in the quote above, many of the wide array of methods of violence were aimed at the total humiliation of the victims that would have broken their morale and annulled their spirit and personality. The extent to which these punishments went beyond the threshold of imagination and human standards presumably discouraged cartoonists from using them, creating humour from them, and presenting to the public cartoons based on gruesome scenes; this was a form of respect and probably also embarrassment of authors toward those victims whose physical and mental health was being compromised by the harshest violence. To put it simply, when creating satire based on the act of, say, piling naked prisoners on top of each other, the practice itself was so dehumanising that the risk of unintentionally insulting and humiliating its victims further was certainly at stake and this was in all likelihood perceived by cartoonists.

In this regard it is not incorrect to talk about self-censorship; however, this is certainly a self-imposed limitation driven not by fear of the regime, rather by the sensitivity of the

topic. Again, this should not be interpreted as implying that there exists a scale of gravity according to which to classify different tortures (moreover, let us bear in mind that subjection to one kind of punishment did not necessarily preclude others); nonetheless, an undeniable difference exists between forcing detainees to salute a dog, on the one hand, and sexual humiliation and assault, on the other. In this respect, out of the wide range of tortures, cartoons based on *falaka* and electro-torture were certainly more powerful than others that could denounce forms of punishment similar to the former; at the same time, they were more "sensitive" and "respectful" than illustrations that could have been dedicated to the latter.

In the case of electric shock a third reason explains its high number of representations. This may be defined as technical; that is to say, the fact that electric shock torture conveyed an animated look to its victims made it by nature an ideal source of inspiration for funny scenes, in one word for satire. As it will be elucidated in the cartoon analysis that follows, the transfer of electricity to a person generates such an unnatural reaction in the body that it paved the way for a multitude of comic sketches almost spontaneously. So, by building the political message around the "objectification" of the human, in other words the reduction of humans to the same or sometimes even lower level than electric generators and objects, these cartoons were able to successfully criticise the practice of torture without succumbing to the risk of ridiculing its victims.

Also the popularity of "*falaka* cartoons" can be explained by a third dynamic, which in this case could be called "territorial". To a certain degree *falaka* is a "regional product", in the sense that as a form of punishment it never belonged to the Western world which, on the one hand, had been a source of inspiration for the graphic line and cartooning style of *Gırgır* (especially the United States), and, on the other, hosted the audience to which the magazine was addressed beyond Turkey.[52] Punishment by whipping the feet was traditionally practiced and historically known in some areas of the Near, Middle and Far East but not in the West; in fact, while the majority of European languages do not have a specific term for it and universally adopt the Spanish word *bastinado* instead, several Eastern languages do. The fact that *falaka* traditionally existed in Turkey and also had a Turkish name[53] made it more local, hence peculiar, than any other torture; thus, while not a specific product of the 1980-1983 era,

[52] Let it be reminded that the magazine was followed and sold in several Western countries, as it is shown by its price indicated in different currencies on the back cover (including dollars, pounds sterling, marks and francs) and by the amateur and semi-amateur cartoons that on some occasions were sent from Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, France and Cyprus.

[53] As a matter of clarity the term *falaka* derives from Arabic; yet, the fact that its meaning is widely known and the word itself is extensively used in Turkey nowadays makes it a Turkish term too, independent from its Arabic origins (like a multitude of other words).

it certainly was the "best candidate" to be elevated in the political cartoons as *the* symbol of the torture of those years.

Now that the reasons for the predominance of electro-torture and *falaka* cartoons are elucidated, let us delve into the examination of a sample of them. In a sequence that appeared in the magazine on January 11 1981 (Fig. 58), we see a fragment of an interrogation dominated by electric shocks. The setting is similar to the one of the illustration that was just analysed insofar as the examined character is forced into a sitting position with a lamp pointed at him, and his arms tied to his chest by a rope; moreover, his left leg and ear are connected to an electric cable which is held by a commissioner who stands on his left side close to an electricity socket, while another interrogator on his right is in charge of the questions.

In the first scene the latter stands in an aggressive position while threateningly declaring: "So you insist on not speaking? Insert this plug!"; so, the former plugs in the cables that are fixed to the young man's body. The second scene shows the consequences of this action; here it is possible to observe the man under the effect of the electricity announcing without drawing breath, as if he had suddenly become a radio speaker: "Doonk[54]… now we broadcast the news report, a summary first: negotiations between America and Iran on the issue of hostages go on. Libya's Head of State Gaddafi moved to action to form a new state…"

Recurrence to electric shock torture is evidently at the basis of this strip; yet, the denunciation is not limited to the fact itself. A first political message that can be detected in addition to the mere criticism of this violent method concerns the identity of the victim and is built around his look. In the first scene this young man does not appear particularly afraid, as one might expect in that situation, but rather stares at the interrogator in a way that expresses disorientation, as if he does not know exactly what the latter expects from him, or what he alludes to when he orders him to speak. The reader is prompted to interpret this resigned look as caused by the fact that he sincerely has no answer to the questions related to political groups and terrorist organisations that the commissioner has been asking him; in the end, as we have learnt through the cartoons dedicated to the identity of prisoners, his shy appearance and worried facial expression are two aesthetic devices through which *Gırgır* marks the

[54] Onomatopoeic word that reproduces the noise that characterises the switch from a radio frequency to another.

innocence of this victim, thus the injustice of the arrest, questioning and torture to which he is subject seemingly based on no proof.

Furthermore, still concerning the recurrence to facial expressions as satirical devices to express moral judgements on characters, it should be remarked that the bewildered look of the interrogated man in the first scene creates a sharp contrast with the fierce expression of his two examiners, who stare at him grimly and appear perfectly at ease. This is a way of putting representatives of civil society and of power on the opposite extremities of the same axe, in order to exalt the dichotomy of victims and executioners, good and evil, that, as we know by experience, is a feature that can be detected in many illustrations of the period.

A second feature that stands as the expression of a specific political message is the reaction of the victim to the electric shock. The "answer" that he gives in the second scene is indeed intended to generate humour as it is highly unrealistic and is totally unexpected to the reader; however, its task is not limited to that. While one would expect a cry of pain as a result of the electricity, to be followed perhaps by an eventual confession, the news broadcast marks a metamorphosis of the man, who has turned into a radio, thus an object. The actualisation of the metaphor of a man becoming as "robotic" as an electric device is the cartoonist's narrative technique to criticise at the same time the fact that this violent method and torture in general are inhuman, and that the amount of electricity administered to the victim is so high that it makes him suffer to a de-humanising degree; ultimately, it is his way to condemn the barbaric nature of torture and the tenacity with which this was perpetrated.

A third element that conceals a specific criticism is the reaction of the two commissioners to the words of the victim, namely their visible puzzlement. The surprise effect is a feature that we have already detected in the previous cartoon and, in this sense, the astonishment of the two questioners here stands on the same level as the irritated violent reaction to the declaration of innocence of the victim in the previous case. There is a relevant difference, however, that is that this time the unpredictable words pronounced by the victim are not premeditated or controlled, they are nothing but an irrational effect of the electric discharge that the interrogators have decided to inflict on his body (any eventual doubt regarding a possible *mise en scene* by the latter is refuted by the expression of suffering that is associated with his speech).

So, the reader is presented with a situation where two representatives of power are trying to extract information from someone they deem to be involved in, and thus guilty of, something; firm in their beliefs, the two men try any method to make him speak, recurring to one of the harshest ones. Despite that, even in the worst moment, when the electric shock

causes a loss of rationality and self-control that in all probability would make a guilty person confess something (and in some case also an innocent one, out of desperation), our victim comes out with an unexpected answer that is totally useless to the interrogators' aim. This suggests that for how much they will insist on torturing him, they will not reach a confession nor obtain any relevant information, simply because this man is not in possession of it and the accusations against him are simply wrong.

To sum up, this third detail stresses the nonsense of torture, its futility as a method especially to incriminate someone who is actually made invulnerable by his own honesty. Overall, beyond the mere existence of the phenomenon of torture against detainees, this strip denounces the fact that its victims could be people randomly suspected of anything without the accusations necessarily being supported by proofs; moreover, the exceedingly exaggerated fury with which torture was practiced is also stressed; and to conclude, the illustration invites the viewer to reflect on its somehow ironic uselessness.

Before turning to *falaka* cartoons there is another caricature dedicated to electro-torture that is particularly worthy of notice (Fig. 59). This dates back to January 4 1981 and portrays a prisoner who, in this case too, is forced to sit on a small stool with his hands tied behind his back; his right foot and left ear are connected to some cables, and catching even more the attention of the observer is the presence of a *çaydanlık*[55] positioned on his head. The burnt hair and dark eye sockets of this man suggest that the cables in question carry electricity and are connected to a generator or a plug for real; in addition, the steam which comes out from the teapot so vehemently indicates that the energy transmitted to the man is so high that the temperature of his body suffices not only to keep tea hot but also to make it boil. This, as such, already implies a highly critical take on torture insofar as, on the one hand, the terrible state of the protagonist is physical proof of the devastating effects of electric shock and, on the other, the unusual presence of the tea-kettle on his head stands as a visual symbol of its absurdity and meaninglessness. Nonetheless, another grotesque feature adds a further political dimension to the scene: the presence of a commissioner who stands next to the examined man, stares at him maliciously, while holding a glass of tea, and declares with satisfaction: "Without this electric torture we would greatly feel the absence of hot tea..."

Two elements are crucial to fully understand the presence of this second character, namely the deep meaning of his comment and the way in which this is expressed. Concerning

[55] Turkey's typical tea-kettle.

the former, these sadistic words suggest that, to begin with, the fact that a man is being tortured is not necessarily driven by the goal of obtaining information or a confession; conversely, it can be rooted in a trivial reason like the mere pleasure of making tea. In the second place, since the Turkish tea tradition implies that the teapot is left on the fire for long timespans in order to always have tea ready to be served, thus not only as part of the preparation process but also during and after consumption, the concern for the temperature that is expressed here hints that this man will have to bear the presence of the kettle on his head as well as the transfer of electricity through his body for a long time; in other words, he is subject to a long lasting torture, which may also be repeated in time and eventually become routine. Moreover, the comment proves that the interrogator deems the life of his victims less important than maintaining the perfect temperature at which a cup of tea can be enjoyed; thus, to conclude, not only does it reveal a complete lack of empathy toward the man who is under examination but it also shows that his very same existence as a human being is held in absolutely no esteem.

Regarding the modality of announcement of this statement, then, two details strike the observer. One is the general impertinence that characterises the declaration, which is expressed through a fierce standing position combined with the placement of one hand in a pocket. This body language denotes an astonishing peace of mind, self-confidence and complete relaxation despite the criminal act of which this man is committing; in other words, they suggest that he feels no reason to be concerned, afraid or ashamed of what he is doing and saying. The second detail that catches the attention is the vicious glance that the questioner casts at the victim, which proves that he is perfectly aware of the barbarity of which he is responsible.

Altogether, beyond shedding light on the existence of electro-torture itself, this caricature stresses the fact that this was normal procedure during the regime; it judges it as sadistic, cruel, uncalled for, and useless; and, lastly, it heavily condemns the interrogators – who were fully conscious of the atrocities that they were committing.

To show the potential of *falaka* cartoons, let us consider a strip that was published in *Gırgır* on January 25 1981 and that to some extent distances itself from the others (Fig. 60). The first scene takes place in an unclear setting that the cartoonist had made anonymous on purpose, that is by simply depicting it in one colour (yellow, but it could have been white too) which flattens the space and removes any possible reference to a specific place. The presence of three men constitutes an unusual composition in this scene insofar as one of them is sitting

on the floor while the other two stand at his sides and hold the two ends of a stick that holds up his feet, thus keeping his soles high.

Certainly, to the *Gırgır* reader of those years this situation must have immediately evoked a *falaka*, an impression that the absence of context derived by the plain background does not refute and that, instead, seems to be confirmed by the behaviour of the two standing men. In fact besides lifting the third character's soles with the help of the stick they appear as threatening him in two ways, namely one by waving a truncheon against him and the other by shouting "Speak! Hey you, speak! Which number?", to which the unfortunate victim replies "42, man". In brief, the observer is prompted to interpret the scene as the fragment of an interrogation where the examiners recur to the menace of torture by *falaka* in order to obtain information, which in this case is the number forty-two.

In the light of the political stand of the magazine, of its position during the regime, and of the several illustrations that were previously exposed in this work, the speed at which the character under questioning releases the information demanded stands as an unexpected exception that should be deemed suspicious, for in no other case in *Gırgır* we come across an interrogated person who replies to questions by pandering to the authorities, thus surrendering to power and manifesting some sort of guilt. And in effect, the second scene unfolds the real setting and dynamics that explain this attitude, which emerge as largely differing from the interpretation that the details of the first sequence suggested. Here, by portraying the space that surrounds the characters the cartoonist reveals that the scene takes place in a shoe store and represents an ordinary shopping moment, where the "victim" is a customer and the other two are shop assistants, whose sole aim is to learn the foot size of the former in order to bring him some models to try. Accordingly, the stick turns out to be an instrument to help the customer to try on the shoes, the supposed truncheon is nothing more than a shoehorn, and one of the standing men tells the other: "Take a shoe size 42 of the model that the sir [may] like, from there, [and] let me see".

The change of setting between the first and second scene is indeed shocking as it is marked by a strong difference. Remarkably, the passage from allusion to reality is considerable not only for the reader, who, for instance, could have misinterpreted the details of the first scene, but also for the fictional customer, whose fearful expression in the first scene reveals that he, too, had the impression of being questioned and eventually subject to torture for real. To put it simply, the reference to *falaka* is not fortuitous nor a mistaken impression of the external observer. Then, let us investigate the reasons why a citizen who is simply buying a pair of shoes should feel the fear of torture.

Two alternative explanations emerge as plausible. The first is that this man was one of the thousands citizens who were involved in mass arrests and subject to *falaka* along with it; although he was then released and is now able to enjoy free life, that experience left him with a psychological trauma that emerges in the most ordinary and least expected situations, including during a routine shopping trip. The second possibility is that he has never experienced the harsh conditions to which detainees were subject in those years; nonetheless, the risk of torture as an almost automatic consequence of the equally high risk of arrest was felt so vividly in Turkish society that even an ordinary citizen like him lived in constant fear, a feeling that deeply affected his daily life.

The flashback and the bogeyman interpretations are both possible and the illustration does not solve the question in favour of one of them in particular; yet, neither does this appear crucial to its final political message. In the end, in both cases, beyond the mere existence of torture that may be deemed already a crime against humanity, this strip denounces the fact that *falaka* had become so widespread that people lived in the fear of experiencing it themselves, no matter if for the first time (bogeyman) or not (flashback), even though they had done nothing that could earn them detention and prison violence; in other words, the shadow of torture burdened society so heavily that it appeared always possible and very real.

Finally, if we consider the sequence in a broader perspective it emerges that by projecting this nightmare onto an anonymous shopper the illustration draws a parallel between the fear that dominated the streets prior to the coup, that is the one of remaining accidentally involved in clashes and political violence, and the one that lingered during the regime, that is of being accidentally caught and tortured, to ultimately denounce the fact that in terms of cruelty and danger for civil society the "bad guys" of the pre-September 12 era were routed out only to be replaced by the "heroes" that had intervened against them.

What has emerged so far from the political cartoons that unveil what actually consisted in the only instances that allowed detainees to break from the monotony of cell life is that those moments were anything but desirable as there was no interrogation without violence and no violence without physical and, conceivably, also psychological torture. This second category has revealed that no matter if the encounter with the authorities was potential, as in the above-analysed strip, or actual, as in the previous ones, both in the risk and in the realisation of a questioning, facing commissioners was hardly a fair experience as it was common for the latter to exploit their power position to turn the confrontation into an intentionally painful, humiliating, sadistic and traumatising moment for their victims.

A clarification is appropriate at this point on the sense of the word "victim" that has come to the foreground so often in this chapter and in particular in this section in relation to the definition of "executioners" that was also attributed to the representatives of authority.

The term is adopted first of all as it mirrors the position of real people *vis à vis* torture, where the definition of real stands here as an antithesis to fictional. As explained early on in this sub-chapter, torture in all its forms was not necessarily practiced to obtain confessions and information from inmates who were involved in illegal activities (a condition which would not legitimise it anyway, as already clarified), it rather responded to the broader mission to establish distance between society and institutions in order to sanction the superiority of the latter and ultimately mark its respectability and power; because of that, exactly like persecutions and arrests it did not differentiate between innocence and guilt. Since anyone was potentially exposed to the repressive machine, this strategy of fear that allowed the actualisation of the already listed multiple methods of torture randomly, on a large scale and at high intensity became the cause of a collective stigmatisation, hence victimisation, of civil society.

The second reason why the definition of "victim" is adopted with no hesitation in the analysis is that by portraying single cases of random torture these cartoons present tangible examples of the effects of this strategy of fear, so they fully reflect the looming fear as well as the materialisation of the victimisation that it generated. In fact, in the examples discussed above we came across protagonists punished for answering examiners' questions, but also characters who undergo violence for not answering them, and then detainees tortured for the "pleasure" of it irrespective of their answers (or of the lack of them). In brief, what the cartoons show is that characters under interrogation are forced into a subordinate position that leaves them no chance to prevail over the arrogance and verbal attacks of commissioners, nor to defend their bodies from the physical violence that these deliver; in one word, it is the position of victim.

Having said that, it is perhaps necessary to clarify that this definition should not lead to the erroneous interpretation of the term victim as automatically implying a defeat against power, or to the conclusion that the characters subject to torture have necessarily surrendered to the authorities. On the contrary, from all the illustrations that shed light on prison violence and the practice of torture it emerges that in the confrontation between interrogated and interrogators the victimisation of the former and the prevailing of the latter occur only in as much as these force the former into a power play that dramatically hampers any opportunity to avoid torture, forcing them instead to a passive acceptance of whatever physical pain they

will experience. Presumably, were the examined given the chance to defend themselves and face the authorities in a legal and democratic framework the victimisation would not be so manifest, potentially it would not occur at all.

To summarise, beyond denouncing torture as a phenomenon itself these cartoons criticise the enormous imbalance of power, rights and freedom that characterised questioning, that was meant to leave the victims intentionally unable to defend themselves and at the mercy of the cruelty of their tyrants. By portraying the victimisation of the interrogated the caricatures emphasise the interrogators' "hangman attitude", their power abuses, their excessive use of violence and their ease with the horrors of torture; to put it simply, the brutality of the regime.

The struggle that the imprisoned body cannot fight may be eventually carried on by the intellect. A set of violence and torture cartoons move away from the hangman angle to rather focus on the victims of examinations and on their experimentation with ways to resist the sense of fear and submission that the encounter with the authorities is meant to instil in them. Here, the interrogated prisoners contrast the limits and pains inflicted on their body by putting forward their intellectual and psychological strength, which emerges as the only and most reliable way to face barbarity. As a matter of fact, this attitude has already emerged to a certain extent in the first and second illustrations examined above, where the victims try to rebel to the state of fear respectively by claiming their innocence and by refusing to speak. These two may be seen as attempts to resist that are then overcome by the extreme use of violence that they generate, which, as just stated, is the major focus of the set of illustrations to which they belong. Besides, other cartoons specifically narrate the ways through which some victims overcame the pressure of questioning and managed to negotiate the balance of power relations to their own advantage.

A representative of this trend is a caricature that appeared on Sarkis Paçacı's column on June 21 1981 (Fig. 61). Here, once more, the reader is faced with a typical interrogation moment that, as we have already seen, is characterised by a man forced to sit on a small stool, lit by a powerful light that is pointed at him from above. The contrast between the strong ray of light and the dark surroundings prevents him from seeing the space around him, a limit that allows him to only hear and feel the presence of two huge men who imposingly stand at his sides.

A difference between this interrogation scene and the others to which we are by now used consists in the stifling air that seems to hang over the room, that may be inferred from

the sweat drops that copiously fall from the face and body of the three characters. This last point is relevant since had the perspiration only affected the sitting man the most logical deduction would have been that it is caused by the feelings of fear and stress that one might expect in this precise situation; however, the fact that the questioners too are sweating – possibly even more than their target, judging from the quantity of drops that come out from their body – hints that there is actually no fresh air in the room, which, in all likelihood, is a basement with no windows where the atmosphere is claustrophobic and suffocating irrespective of the mood of the people who inhabit it. Ultimately, the uncomfortable heat that visually dominates the scene is evoked also verbally through the dialogue that characterises the encounter, which sees one of the questioners rudely asking: "Do not exhaust us further in this heat... speak [!] Where are your friends hiding [?]", to which the examined man replies: "They are in the Turkish bath of the Arabian desert... within the furnace of hot water..."

A consideration that immediately arises from this tit for tat answer is that the man replies to the order to speak without hesitation, without forcing the interrogator to insist on repeating the question. As we know, a similar dynamic was present in the last analysed strip; this time, too, the reason for such lack of hesitation emerges as totally unrelated to submission. In fact, from a pragmatic point of view the reference to "the Turkish bath of the Arabian desert" cannot be deemed a proper answer as there is no single famous Turkish bath in the wide Arabian desert that may be recalled without adding further details; this means that these indications will not contribute to the authorities' finding of any wanted people, the possible accomplices of the man to whom the examiner refers as his friends. Rather, what these words show is that under the pretext of disclosing important information the man mentions the bath, the desert and the furnace with the actual intention of evoking an environment where the heat is even more unpleasant than in the room that hosts them.

At first glance this answer could perhaps pave the way to a "consolation hypothesis", that is the interpretation of his words as driven by the wish to alleviate the suffering caused by the high temperature of the interrogation room by mentioning a context where the heat is more unbearable. However, three facts stand against this hypothesis; first, as a method this appears highly inefficient so it is unlikely that such an idea might have crossed the man's mind; furthermore, there is no realistic reasons why the man should be keen on contributing to improve the working conditions of his questioners given that the rude tone of the latter proves that they have been treating him in an impolite way and presumably shown that they hold him in low esteem; finally, although the features of the characters are not neatly drawn, the interrogated man's eyes are half-closed and his mouth is open in a way that suggests a laugh.

So, at a deeper glance and in the light of these considerations it emerges that the three warm locations are evoked not to reduce the pain but exactly for the opposite purpose, that is to amplify the sensation of heat, hence the suffering of the two interrogators. To put it simply, the latter are being mocked.

The mere fact that the examined man does not go along with the questioners proves that he is neither afraid of them nor of the whole situation to which he is forced. In addition, the mocking makes him unmistakably prevail in the power relations that are at play in that precise moment and that inevitably place him versus those who may be deemed his antagonists. Through the mocking his dominating position unequivocally emerges both at physical and psychological level, two dimensions that are deeply intermingled insofar as the specific verbal challenge that he poses is made possible and effective by the harsh conditions to which the space in which the action takes place forces their bodies. Within this psycho-physical dimension, it is possible to discern two major lines of assertion and resistance.

First, although it is evident that the man under interrogation is struggling to resist in that high temperature as much as the questioners do, the fact that he is able to come up with a clever and totally unexpected answer which exploits exactly the physical difficulty that they are all experiencing, while the other characters explicitly admit their difficulty to cope with it by pleading the heat as an incentive to persuade him to quickly surrender to the questions (unsuccessfully, as we know), indicates that in the end he bears the heat more successfully than them.

Obviously a different level of endurance in an extreme temperature, as such, does not carry a political stance as it is simply realistic and natural that some people may be more sensitive to the heat than others; yet, here it is necessary to read this difference in the light of the side-effects that are at play in the delicate context of the interrogation. That is, notwithstanding their freedom to interrupt the confrontation, take a break from the room, and refresh themselves with drinks of water at any time, the examiners are in a tight spot, whereas the protagonist, who finds himself there against his own will, who might have been subject to food, water, and sleep deprivation and perhaps also to physical violence during previous stages of the questioning, emerges as absolutely lucid and focused on defending his position, to the extent that he promptly offers this insolent answer. In brief, his answer creates a neat contrast between his firmness and the fragility of his two by-standers that marks his doubtless victory both in terms of body and nerves.

Second, the mocking asserts the man’s determination to challenge the questioners with all his means. The interrogation evidently imposes limitations on the expression of his

courage since the authorities' power to "play" with his body in terms of freedom-captivity totally excludes action by his side. Speaking (when allowed, it goes without saying) is the only weapon at his disposal but this, too, is conditioned by the interrogators' opportunity to exert their power also along a safety-danger axis that translates into their possibility to silence him by means of violence and torture at any time. His range of action is thus extremely limited. Despite that, not only does the protagonist decide to provide an answer that will not satisfy the expectations of the questioners, but he also answers back with possibly the sharpest provocation, for had he wanted to "simply" avoid a confession he could have recurred to less challenging yet brave devices. For instance, he could have declared himself innocent or that he was not going to answer any questions, or he could have even refused to speak at all. Instead, he prefers to risk everything with this joke that exploits the potential of his weapon, speaking, to the maximum extent.

It is easy to imagine that these words will leave the interrogators surprised for a while, at least until they realise that their target provided an indication that does not conceal a confession, that is totally useless to their purpose, and, if this were not enough, that implies ridicule. This verbal challenge and the effort that it requires in order to be understood unmistakably asserts his intellectual superiority. Obviously these circumstances will not change the outcome of the questioning to his advantage, conversely they will possibly worsen his position insofar as they are likely to earn him physical punishment (again, further) for daring to show no awe nor respect toward his (frightening, in theory) tyrants. However, exactly in the light of the high risks that it implies this answer unmistakably marks also his moral victory.

To sum up, in the impossibility to defend himself from the physical violence to which the interrogation exposes him, this protagonist puts his courage, intelligence and astuteness at the service of a subtle and refined verbal struggle against the oppressive presence and impositions of the authority. In this way the interrogated is not victimised; conversely, his executioners are made victims of his first of all physical but also, and especially, psychological, moral and intellectual strength. Mocking the oppressor is his strategy of resistance, which shows that notwithstanding the implied violence the interrogations are far from leading to surrender and submission.

In brief, in this section we came across scenes of questioning and interrogations that, as initially stated, are presented as the only moments that could interrupt the monotonous life that detainees were forced to spend behind bars for an unpredictable number of months or

years and which, as it emerged in the previous section, was characterised chiefly by hygienic concerns, mood swings, individual and collective activities like newspapers reading, private writing and the reproduction of spare time occupations. The sample selected for this section allowed us to look at different aspects and stages of questioning, namely, in order, firstly violence against a man who presumably is at the very beginning of an interrogation and is hit following his first answer; secondly, electric shock on a victim after allegedly the interrogators have repeatedly and unsuccessfully tried to make him speak; thirdly, constant electric shock torture that is seemingly outside the frame of a questioning and not connected to a refusal to provide information; fourthly, questioning as a "hallucination" of a shopper who projects his fear of state violence into the future, and perhaps also into the past; and, lastly, the verbal challenge that an examined man poses to his questioners at an intermediate stage of the interrogation, where despite all he is still granted the opportunity to speak and that will supposedly lead him to heavy punishment. These different faces of the encounter between examiners and examined clearly show that as harsh as the cell routine might have been its interruption was manifestly less desirable.

What emerged in our analysis is that through various angles and nuances interrogation cartoons combine praise of the bravery of the people under interrogation with a criticism of the brutality of their questioners.

Regarding the former, it is appropriate to reflect first of all on the theoretical aim of questioning, where the adjective "theoretical" is chosen to imply the condition of fairness that is supposed to guide interrogations and that is missing in the Turkish case for the period concerned by this work. In theory, although questioning is always inscribed within an experience of detention or arrest, that denies freedom by definition, when the condition of fairness is met the encounter with the authorities becomes a liminal situation between captivity and freedom, not only because it breaks the monotony of the former but also because it may be the tool, the passage, to achieve the latter. When this condition is not met, like in these cases, the interrogation becomes a "space of conflict" where for the people under examination to prove their own innocence somehow ceases to be a priority, for the simple reason that the orientation of questioners toward unfair and illegal practices seems not to contemplate this possibility at all; rather, the primary objective of the examined people becomes to defend themselves against the latter, to circumscribe and contrast their power abuse as much as possible.

These cartoons show that while the attitude of the interrogators is expected to push their interlocutors to please them with an accommodating attitude (surrender) and the "right"

answers, these instead turn the dark, scary and suffocating interrogation rooms in spaces where they actively react to the challenge posed by the "conflict" and experiment with ways of resistance. Words emerge as having a crucial role in their struggle as resistance is articulated along a dialogue that comprises a rich variety of narratological strategies, ranging from releasing partial information to simply and neatly declaring oneself innocent, from maintaining silence to consciously lying, from unintentional meaninglessness rooted in the emotional stress and mental confusion that that particular situation may generate to intentional illogical counter-narratives aimed at mocking the examiners. Through the wide spectrum of alternative verbal devices the people subject to interrogation insinuate an epistemological uncertainty that challenges the interrogators on the psychological, intellectual and moral grounds, and marks their defeat.

Concerning the second element that characterises these cartoons, namely the brutality of questioners, this comes to the surface in a manifestly more vivid, tangible and realistic way than the volatile and sometimes ambiguous words of the subjects of interrogation. Generally speaking the violence factor affirms itself as a feature common to all the interrogation cartoons, though with variations that may be determined by its verbal or physical character, spontaneous or planned nature, or by its manual realisation contraposed to the one generated by special devices like in the case of electro-torture. Beyond these differences, violence is undisputedly denounced unilaterally as an institutionalised cruelty that interrogators are permitted at any stage of their encounters with prisoners in order to strike fear, obtain information and confessions, and oppose the latter's attempts to verbally "seize power".

These goals, in particular the first and the last, imply a legitimation of violence also in the case of innocent interlocutors, a detail that is all the more important to highlight insofar as it mirrors the trend that in the real, non-fictional world was true in the majority of the cases. The disproportionate recurrence to violence compared to the "danger" that the people under examination could *in theory* constitute for their interlocutors, for the state and for society is conveyed in the illustrations by portraying said violence as meaningless and unnecessary as it is despicable; it is exactly its absurdity in the real world that paves the way for a spontaneous satirisation that turns it into a successful cartoon subject despite the delicacy of the topic.

This criticism as well as the praise of the victims of interrogations may be observed at the same time in almost all the illustrations that belong to this genre (though in different measures according to whether one or the other constitutes the major focus), where they emerge to a certain extent as complementary and doubtless in inverse proportion; that is, the more the interrogators adopt violent tones and above all measures, the less their targets are

able to carve out a ground of opposition and resistance. In fact, although physical action and self-defence are unattainable *a priori*, the examples above show that in the phases characterised by examiners' attempts to establish a dialogue with their interlocutors in order to obtain information from them the latter's honesty, intelligence and political consciousness give them the strength to enact various forms of intellectual resistance that limit, at least temporarily, the margins of the formers' power; by contrast, this becomes impossible when these recur to the most extreme forms of violence, that preclude the physical and mental faculties of their victims, nullifying not necessarily their bravery but surely their chance to show it.

Indeed, this cannot be deemed an encouraging perspective for it suggests cruelty is on the rise the more the questioning sessions with each target make progress or are repeated. Dark as this perspective may be, it should be recognised as the ultimate message and warning of this cartoon category, which – without neglecting the virtue of the people under examination – ultimately emphasises the high risk at stake for them during these confrontations, which were never on a fair playing field.

Overall, a criminal-victim dichotomy is certainly vivid in the interrogation cartoons, to which we should acknowledge the merit of encouraging a reflection on the paradox of the *de facto* victimisation at the hands of the regime of the people whom the regime itself deemed criminals, and that again the regime was determined to punish at any cost by allowing itself, its representatives, a degree of arrogance and violence that inevitably turned them from respectable authorities into guilty executioners, in other words the actual criminals.

Let us conclude this sub-chapter with a general remark on prison life cartoons. In the previous pages we shed light on the fact that different identities and safety conditions pushed prisoners, on the one hand, and professional cartoonists, on the other, to elaborate different representations of jail life. The reflection on the problems, activities and frustrations of daily life behind bars emerged as a prerogative of the former. These cartoons were rooted in the very same status of political prisoners of their authors, which encouraged them to familiarise themselves with the craft of graphic satire for the first time, not simply as a pastime but also and especially as an opportunity to express political messages; in fact, it was revealed that the representation of this daily life actually concealed accusations against the regime as well as declarations of resilience.

These sketches allowed their amateur authors to elaborate a new form of political struggle that was first of all individual and that the publication in *Gırgır* contributed to make

collective, earning them the merit of providing direct witness of prison reality to the world outside. The latter would hardly have reached awareness of it otherwise, influenced by the official narrations provided by state controlled means of information and by the often compromised and censorship-affected versions of independent media. By challenging power from within prison, place of the repressive machine *par excellence*, these cartoons hit the regime at its core, showing that the authoritarian, intimidating and threatening policies of the junta had no effect on their authors.

The representation of the moments that interrupted the repetitive passing of time in jail, then, namely the violent sessions of questioning, emerged as a prerogative of the professionals of the *Gırgır* team, whose distance from the shadow of repression – relative yet large if compared to the one of detained cartoonists – allowed them to explicitly portray scenes of violence and torture with relative easiness. This cartoon group is doubtlessly connected and complementary to the previous one; in this respect the authors of these illustrations should be considered as taking up from where their jailed amateur colleagues were forced to silence, in other words as pushing forward the criticism that their critical conditions and the deriving safety concerns prevented them from drawing.

The struggle marked by these cartoons was expressly collective as its authors put their skills and freedom at the service of unfiltered and uncensored information, becoming an intermediary between the victims of prison violence and the public, including in the case of the former not only detainees who undertook the challenge of creating critical caricatures and whom the harsh circumstances of detention (both the strict control to which they were subject and the trauma of violence) refrained from pushing sketches to the maximum levels of explicitness, as it was just remarked, but also prisoners who were possibly too afraid (or simply not interested) to approach the art of cartooning at all, which is the majority of them.

The circumstances that determined the realisation of these two axes explain also their two major differences. One concerns the tones of their satire, that may be defined as more serious and neutral in the first case and more creative and powerful in the second. This contrast should be certainly attributed to the limited freedom that affected the creation of the former, but also to the high level of professionality and skills that characterised the latter.

The other difference regards the features that emerge as crucial to the political struggle of prisoners against authoritarianism. In the first case this is solidarity. It is true that in some illustrations prisoners are portrayed while dedicating their spare time to individual activities that do not imply interaction, and that some other cartoons actually hint at minor problems caused by living in the narrow space of the prison cell with strangers; however, in the end

solidarity emerges as the essential element that gives detainees the strength to share and overcome the difficulties of jail life, paving the way to a collectivisation of the prison experience. Said collectivisation allows all of them to unite despite the political and ideological differences that might have made them rivals before their arrest, to finally unite against their current single enemy, the regime.

By contrast, interrogations embody the denial of solidarity and the element that guides prisoners' resistance in the cartoons of the second axis is instead resilience. The latter allows the subjects of the questioning to steer intelligence, imagination and patience toward the elaboration of various attitudes and answers that mark their intellectual and moral superiority over their examiners.

To summarise, both imprisoned and professional cartoonists made a contribution of the utmost importance to disclosing the practices of jail life, shedding light on their more or less dark aspects depending on the limits allowed by the circumstances in which their illustrations were produced. Beyond the differences that characterise the two categories and the multitude of illustrations within them, the prison life cartoons should be read as paying homage to all the prisoners of the regime, to the courage these "ordinary heroes" demonstrated when facing the awful conditions to which they were subject with the blessing of the state. Notwithstanding the comic element that is always present (though in different degrees), the majority of these cartoons discloses such tragic aspects of the prison experience that it is somehow hard to attribute them the merit of laughing at the tragedy of the prison experience, for these sketches undeniably leave the viewer with a bitter taste. Rather, it is appropriate to recognise their primary role in making these atrocities part of the public domain, turning them into issues that affected not only the actual victims but civil society as a whole, thus taking the first steps toward a collective elaboration and overcoming of its trauma.

Life after prison

The trajectory of cartoons that portray and denounce the dramatic impact of authoritarianism on people's life finds its final step in a series of illustrations dedicated to the rehabilitation of prisoners into daily life after their release. With these illustrations cartoonists abandon the severe atmosphere of detention centres, prison cells and interrogation rooms to

project their characters into spaces that belong to the world outside, places like streets, parks, houses and offices, populated by pedestrians, friends, colleagues and beloved ones, places that during detention were perceived as incredibly distant although separated only by wall and fences.[56] Generally speaking these cartoons develop along two major paths that consist namely in the symbolic representation of the marks that the prison experience left on these people and in the visual narration of the inconveniences of a practical nature that affect their daily lives, notwithstanding the fact that detention is a reality that they have left behind.

An example of the first trend is a speechless strip that appeared on the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* page of November 14 1982 (Fig. 62). The first image offers a detail of a prison building from outside, where the iron gates of a wide cell window stand in the middle of the scene surrounded only by the monotonous, stark bricks of the prison wall; a prisoner stands behind this window, holding the iron bars with both hands while looking out at the world mournfully. The next scene is set in a public space that could be either a wide street or square, with stylised residential buildings in the background and three pedestrians walking in the foreground, one of whom is unmistakably the former detainee of the previous scene.

The man's identification is made possible by three features; first, his body posture, that is similar to the previous one except that instead of holding the iron bars he now carries a suitcase; second, his facial expression, which is sad and lifeless exactly as in the other scene; and, last but not least, the presence of some black lines all over his face, body and luggage – which are identical to the iron bars of the prison window with which we became acquainted earlier and that now cover his figure as if they were tattooed on him.

Intentionally simple and minimalistic in style, this strip builds its political message entirely on the few details that enrich the second scene. In fact, radical as this claim might appear it is fair to say that had the first scene been omitted the meaning of the whole strip would have not been affected to a relevant extent since the presence of the iron bars on the body of the protagonist in the second image sufficiently marks his status as former detainee, which is actually the only information that the first one reveals, along with the melancholy derived from it that as a matter of fact could have been predicted anyway. Hence, let us focus on the second part of the strip.

[56] This short distance was literally true in the majority of cases as prisons were usually located (historically set, arranged or newly built) inside towns or at their immediate outskirts, adjacent to living areas and residential neighbourhoods.

The reader faces a former detainee who is not able to enjoy his long-awaited freedom notwithstanding the evident contrast and improvement that this generates in comparison with the critical conditions of his captivity. The scene reveals his pain through details that pave the way for a descending climax which, starting from an object, the luggage, that initially suggests room for a possible optimistic forecast on his future, finally finds its peak in a feature, the shadow of the iron bars, which unmistakably sentences the tragedy of his situation and rejects any positive interpretation.

That is to say, the model and size of the suitcase, which is visibly too bulky to be mistaken as an item of daily use like a shopping bag or briefcase, suggest that the man is not simply carrying but rather moving some belongings from their former place to a new destination. Considering the clues at our disposal, namely the protagonist's connection to prison as a former detainee[57] and the fact that he is now freely walking in the street, it is understood that he is has left prison with the few clothes and objects that he was allowed to take in at the time of his arrest and that he has been given back upon leaving. As a consequence, the presence of the suitcase reveals that he is being shown exactly on the day of his release, which must have taken place only a few minutes or hours before.

In this respect, a hasty analysis could potentially encourage the interpretation of the luggage as a metaphor of the legacy of the prison experience, say as a symbolic visualisation of the burden of detention and of all the harsh aspects that the latter implies, whose consequences the man is bringing into the outside world and will find very difficult to get rid of in his post-release life. However, as an object that can be left and forgotten as easily as it can be carried the suitcase does not actually embody the idea of something – in this case the prison trauma – impossible to abandon. This condition makes this interpretation erroneous, for had the author wished to express the indelible status of the suffering caused by detention he would have done it through a symbolic mark or object whose peculiarity is its stability. This is, in fact, the case of the iron bars on the man's body, as it will be argued later.

Contrary to the misleading negative interpretation, since the presence of the suitcase stresses the man's recent liberation its connotation is actually a positive one. More precisely, the accessory symbolises the beginning of a new chapter in the man's life, the start of his new journey of freedom.

[57] As already explained, although the man's former detainee status is doubtlessly revealed by the first scene, in the absence of it his relation with prison would have nonetheless emerged in the second image from the stripes visible on his body.

The optimistic hint that is initially revealed by the suitcase is called into question to a certain degree by the second detail, which is the expression on the man's face. Notwithstanding his recently gained freedom the protagonist still looks as sorrowful as when he was behind bars, as if no improvement or change had really taken place. As a matter of fact, sadness is presented in a way that does not necessarily blame the difficulties derived by the prison experience for its predominant position among the man's feelings, and that only instils a partial doubt regarding the relation of cause and effect between his former detention and current unhappy look.

More generally, this lack of joy, which is in evident contradiction with his release, is not explicitly motivated by the cartoonist, who displays other clues that could be valid in this sense in addition to the legacy of jail, intentionally leaving the reader with the choice (better said, the uncertainty) of attributing its causes to other factors. For instance, the fact that the man is walking alone could prompt us to interpret his sadness as arising from the fact that no one has showed up at the prison to welcome him and take him home, and, above all, to share with him the important moment of his liberation; the same detail could also suggest that he has no family nor home at all, whose absence now makes him perceive his life as meaningless despite his freedom. In sum, the man's expression is the detail that starts to insinuate doubts concerning the optimistic development that the presence of the suitcase suggests.

The forecast of a bright future is definitely deflated by the third detail, that is to say the iron bars visible on the face and body of the protagonist. In spite of the latter's release from jail, the iron grate covers his face as if he were still physically standing behind it, revealing that after looking at and dreaming of the world through it for so long – who knows for how many weeks, months, or even years – this experience has become part of him, like an indelible tattoo. Certainly the bars are a metaphor of that whole "inside world" that lies behind them, the world of prison with its routine and non-routine activities, comradeship with inmates and conflicts with the authorities; yet, we would be underestimating their function if we deemed them simply a rhetorical clue that the cartoonist adopts to suggest a connection between the man and jail. For, other elements in the illustration reveal that not only is the external observer able to see them on the body of the man but also the people who populate his world.

With reference to this point let us consider the presence of the two other characters in the composition. The two strangers, walking in opposite directions, pass on either side of him and both men turn around to look at him, with a similar attitude and expression, which although intentionally left blurred by the minimalist style that characterises the strip may be

defined as suspicious and dazed. This apprehension reveals that the bars are physically present and clearly visible on the skin and clothes of the protagonist. Hence the reader is glancing at a man who literally carries on his body the mark of prison.

The author resorts to the absurd to create a "grated man" whose surreal peculiarity, the "tattooed" bars, unveil the depth and tangibility of the effects of detention on his body and mind. Their high visibility hints that the pain that the prison legacy causes is vivid not just in the light of the short time elapsed between his release and the moment in which he is portrayed, and which it is not going to fade with the passing of time. On the contrary, it has scarred him deeply and those scars are unlikely to ever fully heal.

Symbolism as a satirical device is not new in Turkish cartoons nor peculiar to the illustrations produced in the historical phase considered in this work; quite the opposite, it was the keystone of the political cartoons of the *elli kuşağı* from which the founders of *Gırgır* had deliberately decided to distance themselves exactly through this magazine, after having experimented with it for about two decades. In this respect, it is no coincidence that the illustration examined above is combined with a long comment in which Aral in person[58] reflects on the merits and limits of the universality of certain visual icons, among which the iron grate, symbol of denied freedom that is central to this strip.

Aral recognises universal symbols such as the grate, the dove and the olive tree the merit of establishing a collective common language that in many cases is essential for the success of cartoons, especially when it comes to satirical illustrations that appear in the daily press, whose demands for fast and current news determine the necessity to create in a short time a clever satire that is capable of reaching the masses.

At the same time, Aral warns that recurrence to symbols that are literally universal, hence comprehensible all over the world, risks flattening the potential of satire, contributing to its homogenisation and uniformity, as well as decreasing the power of local satire whose richness is constituted by icons that belong to a shared national culture. For instance, he argues, the businessman character who has been traditionally portrayed worldwide as a cigar smoker wearing a suit and with a big stomach could be easily replaced in Turkey by caricatures of real businessmen like Sakıp Sabanci, Vehbi Koç, Sıtkı Davut Koçman and Halit Narin; this would make satire more vivid and increase its critical power since such portraits would hit both these single men and the whole category that they embody.

[58] In this case it is possible to assert that the comment is written personally by Aral based on the author's mentioning of some old caricatures that he claims to have published in the late 1960s on *Ant* (Oath), a socialist weekly magazine that was issued between 1967 and 1971. Aral actually did work for *Ant*, where he curated a column of caricatures inspired by the events of the week, titled *bir haftalık öfke* (a weekly anger).

Aral goes on by explaining that although *Gırgır* still receives a relevant number of symbolist illustrations by amateur cartoonists, he is generally reluctant to publish them for two reasons, namely because in most of the cases they are too similar to other cartoons previously published and because for the reasons just mentioned he does not support these expressions of universal symbolism. Then, with reference to the strip that paved the way for this long reflection he explicitly asserts that the iron bars have been extensively adopted by political satire in the past, admitting that by just thinking back to his own production at least two cartoons immediately come to his mind. Nonetheless, he clarifies, he decided to select this strip for publication insofar as here the iron bars do not simply have an iconic function; rather, they are portrayed with a "naturalising purpose", that is to say as if they were merely a somatic trait of the man, which indicates that they have literally become an integral part of his body and, by extension, of his life.

In brief, we may conclude that this first trend of "post-detention cartoons" is based on iconic representations of the traces of detention that are naturalised by recurrence to the absurd in a way that stresses the deep roots of the prison trauma in the soul of former detainees, along with its influence not only on their perception of freedom in the immediate aftermath of release but also on their view of the world and of their entire existence.

The second trend renounces symbolism in favour of a narrative that develops along practical situations and the vicissitudes of daily life. These illustrations are set in various ordinary circumstances ranging from the home to the work place, where ex-detainees experiment with ways to reinsert and where they should in theory find themselves at ease in the light of the "normality" that these contexts embody compared to jail. The reader would expect former detainees to be actually glad of being back in these milieux; instead, we see them struggling and suffering, unable to adapt themselves to moments and habits that are normally taken for granted and accepted as conventional by society, but that become anomalous, difficult, even impossible for them to cope with.

This applies not only to daily routine but also to special recurrences that should add happiness to it, like weddings, as it emerges from a caricature that appeared on the back cover of *Gırgır* on September 18 1983 (Fig. 63). This illustration displays the interiors of an apartment where a young couple is moving on the day of their marriage, as it is evident from the wedding suit and dress that the two are wearing respectively and the flower bouquet that the bride still holds in her hands. The focus is specifically on the bedroom, where the couple has just entered in what could be deemed a tour of the house for the bride who seems to be

visiting the place for the first time and who was evidently not involved in the choice of which home to take (whether for rental or sale is not clear, neither is it relevant) nor in the decisions concerning the furniture, as her husband's words reveal to the reader.

The man comments on the unusual bed that he has bought for this room, their room, whose model has visibly upset the young lady who now stares at it, her mouth wide open, as if she cannot believe her eyes. In fact, what lies in the middle of the room is not a big comfortable double bed for the couple to share in the long road that they have just taken together; on the contrary, it is a bunk bed with two single mattresses, whose sole decoration is a basic and cold iron structure. To put it simply, based on the style and lack of adornments, it resembles a prison-cell bunk bed. The man's embarrassed expression and words reveal that he is perfectly aware that the bed is not what his wife (and anyone else in her shoes) might have expected; in fact, he apologises "I hope you'll forgive me my darling, ...", and justifies his choice by explaining that "after spending so many years in prison it is impossible for me to lie elsewhere".

This caricature clearly portrays the difficult integration of a released detainee into ordinary life and in this particular case into married life. Despite the clarity with which this fact emerges, an accurate analysis reveals that the illustration follows a narrative structure that beyond this straightforward meaning expresses a more complex message. Specifically, the presence of a young couple, their fears and expectations arising from marriage and domestic life, and, not least, the information that may be deduced from the groom's comment encourage a gender-based analysis.

From a gendered perspective, a first aspect that comes to the surface in the scene is the whole set of projections rooted on the first wedding night and revolving around the bedroom, a space where the spiritual union between the two characters is expected to be ultimately sealed by a physical one that, according to traditional cultural norms, should be the first one among them and, unconditionally, the first at all for the bride. As a matter of fact the imagination linked to the first wedding night is not explicitly mentioned by the cartoonist, essentially because it is not the main focus of the illustration; still, the decision to set the sketch precisely in the bedroom and, not least, the major role that the bed itself plays for the general success of the image from a satirical point of view leave little doubt about the allusion to it.

Against any sceptical doubt regarding this point, let us clarify that had the author wished to focus exclusively on the difficult re-integration of the liberated detainee into domestic life he could have easily chosen a situation set in another domestic space, for

instance the kitchen, that would have paved the way for a similar witticism based on, say, the quality of food (a preference for cold and unpleasant tasting meals as opposed to hot and appetising ones) or the choice of beverages (only tap water notwithstanding the opportunity to benefit from a wide range of cold, hot, soft and alcoholic drinks), or the bathroom, where the groom could have decided to renounce hot water, used as he was to cold showers in jail. In addition, the cartoonist could have decided to set the scene in the first days of married life without insisting necessarily on the first one. Instead, these specific temporal and spatial settings emerge as intentionally chosen to evoke the sexually related idea of the first wedding night.

A second aspect which a gender-based analysis invites us to reflect on refers to the subordinate position of the bride vis-à-vis the groom. Like the previous one, this feature too conforms to the traditional cultural codes of patriarchal societies like the Turkish one, that expects women to leave the father's abode only to pass under the protection of another man through marriage – an idea of protection that implies a subordinate position for the woman, whose life, freedom and happiness is conditional upon the wishes, decisions and approvals of the head of the family, the father before and then the husband.

Without giving it a negative connotation, but neither with the aim of promoting it, this cartoon reproduces this cultural norm insofar as, as already noticed, the man's comment reveals that he took fundamental decisions concerning the choice of their living place and its furniture without involving his partner not even for a suggestion or opinion. In brief, he neglected the woman's thoughts in this respect, a condition that appears all the more paradoxical in the light of the fact that according to those same traditional patriarchal norms the mother-wife is expected to spend most of her time in the house, so considering all the domestic tasks that she is supposed to perform it would be logical to attribute great value to her opinions on this domain with which no one else is or will become familiar as much as her.

Contrary to all the previous analyses included in this work, that are specifically oriented towards a political reading of the cartoons selected for the argumentation, where "political" is meant in the strictest and most old-fashioned meaning of the term, in this case large room is dedicated to the gender-based examination insofar as it is exactly through the gender relation that the political denunciation of this cartoon is fully realised. In fact, although the two aspects discussed so far are not related to the repressive policies of the military regime, the third one, that only a gender-oriented discourse allows us to fully bring into focus, is.

This is, rather than an aspect, a detail within the room, namely the only picture that appears in the scene: hanging on the wall right above the top of the bunk bed stands a relatively big image (of the same width as the bed) that is possibly a photograph or, more likely, a poster which depicts a naked woman lying on her side and facing the viewer in an alluring position. Her blond hair, which contrasts with the dark hair of the bride, reveals clearly that she is not the same person; at the same time, this woman is clearly not a lover nor another person who could affect the couple's relationship, rather she is a pin-up girl poster put there by the man in order to stimulate his own imagination. What the presence of this picture does is to reiterate that dominant male position that already came to the foreground through the other aspects that characterise the cartoon.

The symbolic allusion to the first wedding night, the husband's exclusive responsibility for providing a shelter to his new family and, finally, the picture of the naked beauty are unmistakable expressions of a masculine culture; yet, a major difference opposes the first two to the third one, that is that while the former belong to a set of socially established norms, the latter surpasses and even violates them, for the overt exhibition of a naked female body is not tolerated in a conservative milieu, even less if that milieu is accessible to women. Consequently, it is legitimate to ask what factors allow the groom to feel comfortable with such an "improper" yet explicit and, one could say, vulgar expression of masculinity.

This man's ease with putting his beloved face to face with the image of his idealised woman constitutes an oddity in the scene that is matched in terms of strangeness with his preference for the bunk bed. The surprise effect that both elements have in the economy of the caricature encourages their examination in relation to each other, from which it emerges that their affinity is anything but casual. Conversely, the bed and the picture compose a single set of meanings that take the observer to a precise dimension, that is the one of prison, whose unpleasantness is alluded by the former and whose totally and exclusively masculine dimension is evoked by the latter.

At this point let us clarify that it is indeed true that the cross-reference to jail would have been manifest also without recurring to the gender analysis, since the groom's words make reference to detention explicit from the very beginning; however, the gender analysis leads to the additional meaning of this illustration that would not be disclosed otherwise. That is to say, an argumentation developed only along the past-present, jail-freedom axis would have led to conclusions similar to the ones that emerged from the previous strip, namely consisting in the interpretation of this scene as denouncing the difficult, not to say impossible,

re-integration of former detainees into ordinary life; from this perspective the naked woman's picture would have appeared simply as a minor detail in support of the allusion to prison that is already fully and successfully accomplished by the bunk bed. What the gender-based analysis does, instead, is to emphasise the presence of this picture, put it in relation to the female protagonist of the scene, thus turn the readers' attention not only to the groom but also to the bride. Let us investigate how this happens.

As mentioned above, the woman in the portrait is in all likelihood a pin-up girl who does not represent a realistic "threat" for the spouse to be suspicious or jealous of; yet, although her influence in the couple's life is limited to her silent and constant appearance on the wall, the very same presence of the picture is offensive and disrespectful to the wife, it is a presence that in "normal" conditions a woman would not tolerate and that, before that, a man would not dare to hang in the house that he shares with his beloved. However, this case tells us a different story, the one of a man who transgress this scheme and who does so conditioned by the influence of detention, which makes his life, thus his relationship too, abnormal.

It is perhaps appropriate to clarify that nothing in the groom's behaviour suggests a macho attitude or intentional domination and arrogance toward his bride; conversely, his embarrassed expression and the apology that he feels compelled to make as soon as they enter the bedroom clearly show that he is aware that the bunk bed and the picture are two elements that will disappoint his spouse and that he feels sorry for that. Furthermore, other details such as a carpet, a bedside table with lamp and two nice little mirrors hanging on the wall suggest that the man has put some effort into creating a pleasant environment, thus that his wife's comfort matters to him. Nonetheless, the prison legacy does not allow him to replace that bed with a double one nor to remove the poster from the wall in order to bring this process to an end; to leave it unaccomplished will make his wife unhappy, but this is the most that he can mentally manage to do, at least at this first stage of his release and of their life together.

This answers the question related to the reason behind the man's decision to hang this specific picture onto the wall: it is not an insolent desire of masculine imposition but the prison trauma so deeply rooted in his soul and life that ultimately led him to do so. The bunk bed is already a clear symptom of the difficulties rooted in his prison experience and that are evidently going to affect the couple's life together, but the picture pushes the expression of such difficulties to the maximum, as it deeply hurts the woman's pride as well as her expectation of a happy marriage.

This is exactly the point of the illustration, more precisely: the trauma of detention affects not only the people who have experienced it but also the ones around them. Family

and friends of former detainees must make an enormous effort to understand the difficulties that their loved ones have encountered and will encounter in their return to freedom, are asked to accept their fragile conditions and strange needs, and are asked to endure this delicate phase of transition for the time being, although with no guarantee that they will ever fully recover. On the one hand, former detainees are aware of the extent to which their status affects their loved ones; still, they feel unable to overcome the trauma and this creates a sense of guilt in them that adds a further layer of suffering to their already damaged psyche. On the other hand, patient and understanding as they might be, these relatives and friends who assist released prisoners in their return to freedom are able to help and understand them only to a certain extent, since detention during those years was something that the people who had not gone through it themselves would never be able to fully understand.

In conclusion, the two trends that define the cartoons dedicated to life after prison differ in stylistic and narrative terms insofar as, first, the former insists on symbolic depictions of the trauma of detention while the latter puts forward a realistic materialisation of it. Furthermore, in the first case the marks of this trauma are represented as allegories that often appear on the body of the ex-detainee, whereas in the second they are set into practical circumstances of real life. Finally, awareness of this prison legacy on the part of the reader occurs visually in the first group and through narration in the other.

Nonetheless, these trends present substantial similarities too, that arise from the common political denunciation that they express. In all "post-detention cartoons", in fact, the reader faces liberated people who are anything but free since their pre-arrest light-heartedness is lost forever, their physical and psychological integrity lies in the prison cells and interrogation rooms, binding them to those places with an invisible thread that is enormously difficult to sever. Impossible, it should be said. For, the two samples stress the indelible status of the prison trauma, one by portraying the shadow of the iron bars as deeply imprinted onto the protagonist's body and the other by having the groom explain that "it is impossible" for him to sleep in any other kind of bed, rather than saying that he has not got back to the habit of a standard bed *yet*.

For these former detainees places other than prison, like the streets and even one's own house, which should be perceived as spaces of freedom and even more so in relation to prisons, become "non-spaces" where they will carry on their existence as though in limbo. The legacy of the traumatic moments experienced under arrest does not allow them to perceive the places of their new "liberated" life according to the inside-outside dichotomy:

such juxtaposition does not make sense any more as a vivid trace of the former survives in the latter. Something of the inside world will always follow them outside after their release, after the end of the military rule and beyond.

Conclusions to the chapter

Arrests, detention and the wide set of harsh conditions related to prison emerge as the aspects of the military rule through which *Gırgır*'s satire decided to denounce the totalitarian character of the regime. It was shown that these cartoons portray the reality of jail from several angles, from arrest to release, conveying the boredom, monotony and sadness of daily life behind bars, on the one hand, without hesitating to disclose the violent practices that prisoners were forced to endure, on the other. In the light of the variety and richness of the illustrations that were assessed throughout the chapter, it is finally possible to trace a general profile of their protagonists, both of the positive and of the negative ones.

As far as the former are concerned, it was proved that except for the cases of caricatures that are intentionally meant to portray specific prominent figures among the intellectuals and unionists who fell under the repressive machine of the junta, the representation of the victims of political persecutions generally consists in anonymous characters, most often men whose age spans from the teens to adulthood and whose docility neatly clashes with the prison context, where one would rather expect to find aggressive criminals with gangster-style behaviour. The contrast between the temper of these people and the nature of the environment in which they are forced underlines their non-involvement in activities that could make their detention legitimate, thus also the chance nature according to which citizens could fall into the grips of arrests.

All these men, who find themselves in jail possibly without even being notified of the official reasons for their captivity, get in contact with each other and establish relationships that are not simply built on their forced stay in a common, enclosed space but also on the episodes of violence and humiliation to which they are subjected, often individually and on some occasions also collectively. Willingly or not, the extreme conditions of life behind bars and the dramatic nature of these moments generate solidarity, they unite prisoners paving the way for a collectivisation of their experience.

Ironically, while the regime conceives of penitentiaries as places of "rehabilitation" for people who do not align themselves with its political model, the treatment to which it subjects them has an effect that consists in anything but obedience. Conversely, said collectivisation transposes the scope of the *karıştır-barışır* objective prearranged by the junta, as, by "mixing", all the "I" detainees who had no connection with each other until their arrest and possibly also differing political views end up not only "reconciling" but also combining into a "we" that gives them the strength to endure detention and, ultimately, to elaborate powerful intellectual and political responses to their imprisonment, hence to power.

Regarding the torturers of these prisoners, it was shown that these are embodied by the various figures who were responsible for supervision and punishment in the detention centres. In their case too, cartoonists put forward characters whose aesthetic features do not show particular connotations that could eventually help the observer to identify them with specific real figures; on the contrary, these fictional men embody general prototypes of state representatives, above all of interrogators, prison directors and prison guards.

The representation of all these negative characters is marked by a strong ambiguity concerning their belonging to either the police, the armed forces or the *gendarmerie*. That ambiguity emerges at two levels. One is visual and arises from the approximate depiction of the uniforms worn by these "bad characters", which omits details like the model of the jacket or the emblem on their caps that could instead disclose their professional identity. And the other may be defined as performative as it relates to the actions and manners of these "bad characters" vis-à-vis their victims, that could be easily attributed to the three orders without exception.

The reiteration of these two devices proves that such ambiguity is anything but casual, on the contrary it is intentionally created in order to mirror the one that came to exist for real among these institutions. In fact, the order set by the regime had led to a situation in which these three distinct organisations found themselves side by side in the control of the country and, although not directly involved by the military in the administration, both the police, who normally operated within the network of the civil administration system and carried out their duties under the command of the civil authority, and the *gendarmerie*, responsible for public order in areas that fall outside the jurisdiction of the police, came to be controlled by the armed forced in their temporary guise as rulers.

In other words, between 1980 and 1983, the law enforcement task of the police and the complementary duty of the *gendarmerie* came to translate into action the diktats of the

generals who occupied the highest seats of power. Accordingly, the systematically unclear depiction of the representatives of authority in the cartoons reflect their authors' perception that beyond their different duties and responsibilities, the military, the *gendarmerie* and the police were clearly all accomplices and executioners.

Within this range of unquestionably negative depictions of the state representatives with which prisoners are forced to face, a tendency to hit the higher ranks more vehemently than their subordinates is detected in these cartoons. In fact, although no position within the institutional hierarchy is spared a critical representation, on some occasions the prison guards are portrayed as having a neutral behaviour toward the detainees, as in some cartoons that denounce the phenomenon of mass imprisonment, or even a comprehensive attitude, like in the caricature about Güney. This should be ascribed to awareness on the part of cartoonists that low rank officers did not necessarily believe in the righteousness of the cause against political prisoners, nor in the legitimacy of such authoritarian measures. In other words, the authors of these illustrations might have wanted to partially "redeem" those who were, to a certain extent, the minor pawns in the game of the (military) rulers.

On the other hand, interrogators and all higher ranks are always captured while performing violence. Their representation refutes any possible mistaken conclusion that cartoonists were afraid of criticising them, as in particular the torture cartoons prove that *Gırgır* did not hesitate to overtly denounce the violation of human and civil rights that the state was systematically perpetrating through them.

Concerning the degree of explicitness of the criticism expressed by these cartoons, we must admit that the denunciation of the most repressive aspects of the military government is never articulated along a representation of the utmost oppressors, namely the five generals. In the same way as in the previous chapter it emerged that the members of the junta were never chosen as direct targets of the caricatures that criticise the political performance of the regime, in the illustrations considered here too the five generals are spared any direct satire.

Such absence is rooted in the same concern that prevented cartoonists from satirising them as political actors, as it was discussed in the previous chapter, that is to say the fact that the strict censorship that was in force at that time made it inconceivable to caricaturise, say, Evren without being subject to editorial and legal consequences that would have affected the magazine, its editors and the single authors whose pen had dared to challenge the junta so audaciously. There is, therefore, a certain degree of "wise self-censorship" at the roots of the absence of the highest representatives of power in these oppression cartoons. This censorship is defined as wise without reserve insofar as, as it emerged throughout the chapter, avoiding

making the junta a direct satirical target does not prevent these cartoons from criticising the regime, embodied by all those figures who interact with citizens (in this instance with future, current, and former prisoners) on behalf of the "untouchable five", and denouncing its practices.

Overall, this satirical output results in a great variety of portraits of the lackeys of the regime, from those who simply perform their function to the ones who openly support the repressive policies of the government, from violent interrogators to professional torturers, from those who operate in public spaces like squares and streets to those who are on duty in police stations and prisons. Except for the exceptions that were pointed out above, in the majority of cases the fictional representatives of the regime are violent, brutal and arrogant, they often reveal their cruel nature and on some occasions they are even genuinely sadistic. The general image that emerges is an anti-heroic one, not in the sense that they lack bravery, instead that these figures who should in theory protect the population from danger reveal themselves as "evil heroes" who ultimately constitute the utmost danger.

An aspect on which it is worth reflecting is that although this work is based on a juxtaposition that sees, to put it simply, the regime against civil society, in this chapter the latter is represented by prisoners exclusively: future, current and former ones, to summarise in accordance with the stages of arrest that are displayed in these cartoons, but all the same prisoners. Indeed, the whole range of political cartoons of *Gırgır* puts forward various representatives of both the military government and the population; for instance only in this chapter we came across army, police and *gendarmerie* officers, interrogators, prison directors and prison guards, as far as the former is concerned, as well as different categories of people belonging to the latter such as unionists, artists, intellectuals, students, unmarried men and ordinary people in general. Yet, considering these cartoons in a broader perspective it is astonishing to realise that within the wide satirical production of the triennium, the oppression cartoons converge almost exclusively on the prison sphere, while only a few caricatures are devoted to other forms of repression, like the critical status of freedom of expression and censorship in the media, the imposition of curfews and the way these affected people's life, or the imposition of shutting down all associations, just to mention a few.

While it is understandable and somehow also predictable that jailed amateur cartoonists drew political sketches set in detention centres (having established that the engagement of detainees with the realisation and publication of cartoons that denounce their current situation behind bars is anything but predictable, on the contrary it is surprising and plainly extraordinary), it is significant that free cartoonists as well, i.e. the professional

cartoonists of *Gırgır*, focused predominantly on the prison dimension among the number of issues that proved the iron hand of the regime.

This trend indicates that cartoonists decided to give priority to the thousands of people who were unjustly detained in those years, whereas, for instance, the censoring of an author's piece of work or an employee's impossibility to reach the workplace on time in the morning due to the curfew were probably perceived as less urgent issues based on the fact that the author and the employee could still enjoy the physical freedom of which other subjects were instead deprived. The will to give voice to the latter above all confirms that the prison experience was perceived as the most pressing aspect of repression, the one that unequivocally proved that the military had stepped in as oppressors.

In the light of cartoonists' commitment to speak (draw) in the name of the victims who were most strongly hit by repression, a theme appears as "the great absentee" among the issues denounced through the oppression cartoons, namely death. Death by torture and by capital punishment[59] may be deemed, in fact, the climax in the escalation of mistreatments that were reserved to political prisoners, that started with mass imprisonment and then passed through extreme prison living conditions and the perpetration of violence; however, the political denunciation of *Gırgır*'s caricatures ends with the representation of the latter, providing no representation of death whatsoever. Whereas reluctance to depict scenes of death in prison is fairly understandable on the part of prisoners themselves,[60] the silence by professional cartoonists certainly seems more unexpected, especially in the light of the above considerations.

This absence may be interpreted, first, as a form of respect toward the sadly long list of people who had died by the hand of the Turkish state in the past, for actually the death penalty was not a topic of *Gırgır*'s satire before September 12; so, it was first of all a matter of sensitivity and common sense that had always discouraged cartoonists from creating

[59] To some extent also death by hunger strike and self-immolation may be deemed part of this discourse. Although different insofar as the agents who ultimately caused death in these two cases were the prisoners themselves, hunger strike and suicide (in prison) were nonetheless political responses that could be attributed, at least partially, to the pressure exerted on detainee by the various figures who interacted with them in jail.

[60] With regard to the absence of death caricatures by the hand of jailed cartoonists, let us mention here the only exception to this trend, which is constituted by a caricature made by inmate İbrahim Akaydın during his detention in the prison of Mersin. The illustration displays a detainee in the act of running around a noose in a jail courtyard, along with two other inmates who stare at him and comment that "he has been warming up since his dossier was sent to the board [of examiners]". These words hint that the running character has no hope of a positive outcome for his trial and expects to be condemned to death, precisely by hanging. Doubtlessly, the cumbersome presence of the noose makes the allusion to the death penalty even more straightforward. While being displayed at the exhibition *İcerden Dışarıya Sevgilerle 24 Hapisaneden Karikatürler* in 1986 this sketch did not appear in *Gırgır* during the regime; this condition turns it into a "partial" exception and is the cause of its non-inclusion in the sample case that guided the analysis of this chapter.

humour from it. Furthermore, the same form of respect regarded also the cases of prison deaths registered under the regime, for detainees continued to be executed also after the coup and unofficial deaths (i.e. deaths after arrest in unclear circumstances for which the state denied responsibility) became a phenomenon on the rise during the triennium. Finally, cartoonists were keen on avoiding illustrations on this subject out of respect for the thousands of people who were alive but found themselves in jail under the regime, thus who were running the risk of death day by day, both by torture and by execution. In brief, it was found inappropriate to joke about death, even less about its institutionalisation, especially in such a delicate political phase.

The cases of the censored writer and the employee mentioned above as examples of people who, unlike prisoners, are physically able to adapt their lifestyle and work to the conditions imposed by the regime and also to fight repression with a greater margin of freedom compared to jailed citizens leads us to a reflection on the relationship between agents and means of resistance to authoritarianism. In the case of our cartoons this translates into the relation between cartoonists and their fictional characters.

It emerged throughout this chapter that the oppression cartoons enacted political resistance at two levels, that is to say a fictional and a real one, namely the one of the characters and, accordingly, the one of their authors. As far as the latter are concerned, a reference to the distinction between free and jailed ones becomes essential in the light of the fact that their different status of freedom paved the way for different political objectives in their illustrations.

In the caricatures realised by free cartoonists we came across fictional citizens being arrested, questioned and tortured on the ground of their alleged political activities, sometimes only beliefs; as it was repeatedly stated, these scenes mirror the witch-hunt that came to paralyse civil society during the regime and the prisoners who populate these sketches, though often anonymous, are a fictional alter ego of the real victims of mass arrests and political persecution. In these cartoons we see them resisting and challenging the oppressor with their intellectual and moral strength, which belongs to the multitude of people who were subject to that treatment in real life.

Since it would be too idealistic and romantic to claim that all the political prisoners of the regime reacted to repression with such determination and bravery, it is fair to claim that the heroic depiction of detainees mirrors the engagement of a portion of them. Nonetheless, the fact that these scenes do not speak in the name of each single political prisoners should not lead to the misleading conclusion that these representations are idealised; they rather

correspond to cartoonists' will to both pay homage to these prisoners and, at the same time, instil strength and courage also in those who were feeling lost in the meanders of detention centres, as an encouragement to resist.

In this way cartoonists unmistakably declared their support to prisoners, hence their disapproval of the repressive policies of the junta. Albeit dangerous and likely to cost them censorship and persecution, these cartoons were their loudest manifesto against the military government.

The level of bravery and political engagement attained by free illustrators through the realisation of oppression cartoons becomes even more effective and astonishing when the agents of satire are themselves prisoners. As our examples indicate, these cases constitute a significant portion of the total; in fact, let us point out that half of the sketches examined in this chapter (fourteen out of twenty-seven) were realised by amateur cartoonists behind bars and published during their detention. Moreover, almost all of them display current or former inmates explicitly grappling with the discomfort of prison life (eleven out of fourteen).[61]

Although on the one hand it is logical and coherent that scenes of jail life are produced by prisoners themselves, on the other it is unquestionably surprising that notwithstanding the precariousness of their physical and legal safety these prisoners decided to denounce practices and conditions of which they were direct victims. As it was already noticed in Chapter 2, by realising their cartoons these cartoonists reinvented themselves as political enemies of the regime, some of them for the first time, namely those who had been taken into custody based on no proof and had not been active in politics until their arrest, and some others for the second time, that is to say those who were active political militants also prior to their arrest. Producing and circulating cartoons like the ones that we came across in the analysis implied an enormous risk for these prisoners; despite that, or rather exactly because of that, it was their most effective way to resist and show those in power that it had no influence on their mind and political thoughts, no matter how much it constrained their physical freedom.

To conclude, repression under the regime emerged as an aspect that *Gırgır* was successful in criticising as much as the political performance of the military government. In this case too, the criticism was articulated along a wide range of aspects, characters and nuances, with the difference that here the blow to the oppressor was accompanied by a tribute to its victims that doubled the intensity of the political message. Moreover, the other

[61] Two of the remaining ones are focused on prison mice and the last one caricaturises the minister of justice.

difference that has come to the surface is that whereas the illustrations analysed in the previous chapter explicitly put forward a condemnation aimed at specific political figures, here the protagonists, positive and negative alike, are anonymous characters. The narration of the bravery of these anonymous prisoners vis-à-vis their equally anonymous aggressors is surprising, it sees the dominators and dominated ultimately reversing their roles as winners and losers.

CHAPTER 6
SATIRICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ARMY ON THE BATTLEFIELD

In the previous chapter it was argued that the image of the military in power that emerges from the cartoons criticising the repressive policies and practices of the regime is an anti-heroic one. This definition was chosen in the context of the violent cartoons not to suggest a lack of bravery on the part of the rulers, rather to emphasise the paradox of a political cadre essentially presenting themselves as rescuers of the population (from political, financial and social instability) but actually ruling against it, like negative heroes who suddenly unveil their evil nature and exploit their power to the detriment of the masses who had relied on them. The following pages will discuss the calling into question in *Gırgır* of the other meaning of heroism related to the military: courage and virtue on the battlefield.

The focus of this analysis are the so-called *asker karikatürleri*, that is to say "soldier cartoons" that portray army officers and soldiers in uniform struggling with various vicissitudes of their life in the barracks. Let us explain first of all that while the illustrations that were debated in the previous chapters represented a heterogeneous spectrum of authors, context of production, real circumstances and news items that constituted sources of inspiration and, ultimately, the space that they held inside the magazine, the focus of the following analysis is a single satirical feature, namely the comic strip named *Biraz da savaşalım* (Let's fight a little bit) that was uniquely and entirely dedicated to the military world.

Birth and roots of the Biraz da savaşalım *strip*

Biraz da savaşalım was the creation of Behiç Pek, who had started his career as a cartoonist in 1976 – indeed, at *Gırgır*. Back then, Pek was a high school student with some artistic skills and a great passion for satire, as well as a faithful fan of the political cartoons of *Akbaba* until its closure (in 1977) and an enthusiastic reader of *Gırgır* since its birth. Of the latter he particularly appreciated the tie that from the very beginning it had been able to establish with the population.

At the age of eighteen, just before starting his university career in graphic arts, Pek tried his luck by submitting his first amateur cartoon to *Gırgır*, which immediately opened the

doors to the *Çiçeği Burnunda Karikatürcüler* and, later that year, to a position among the permanent staff. As a professional cartoonist he came to create several illustrations for the magazine, both regular and sporadic, both by himself and in cooperation with other colleagues, like the highly appreciated page of *Muhlis Bey* that he co-authored with Latif Demirci. Overall, in this fruitful production *Biraz da savaşalım* became the creation that more than any other carried his mark, and was the one that readers immediately associated with his name and pen (and they still do), as this was the satirical contribution signed exclusively by him that was published most regularly and for the longest time.

The strip made its first appearance in the pages of *Gırgır* in January 1981, just a few months after the seizure of power by the army; yet, the concept of this military parody had been born two years earlier in a different magazine. In fact, it should be revealed that between the beginning of Pek's career as a cartoonist and the 1980 coup, the founding of a new, strongly political satirical weekly had caused a temporary suspension of his commitment to the team led by Aral. The weekly in question was *Mikrop* (Microbe), founded by Engin Ergönültaş in 1978 with the aim of promoting a more vehemently, explicitly harsh political satire,[1] an objective that quickly convinced a group of *Gırgır* cartoonists, among whom Pek, to leave their position at Alayköşü Caddesi to join Ergönültaş in this new editorial adventure.

The soldiers' cartoons took shape for the first time during the experience at *Mikrop*, where the idea was initially inspired in Pek by Ergönültaş and where they began to be published as a strip called *Savaş çok ciddi bir iştir* (War is a very serious business). Although the magazine recorded appreciation among the public, it did not take long for *Mikrop* to encounter editorial difficulties and even pressure from the outside due to the critical period of political instability that the country was experiencing. These circumstances ultimately led to its closure in less than two years, prompting its "pioneers" to go back and knock on Aral's door again.

So, by mid-1980 Pek was back at *Gırgır*, where he soon agreed with Aral to carry on the adventures and misadventures of his fictional soldiers with the discretion of giving the strip a new name,[2] hence *Biraz da savaşalım*. This strip retained its spot for ten years, until

[1] At that time the social engagement of *Gırgır* with the different segments of the population was evident, and, as a matter of fact, it had been the major factor that had attracted Pek to its headquarters for the first time, as reported above; however the political identity of the magazine was not yet fully defined. Rather, it was still in progress and at an experimental stage. As we know, it was then forged in the late 1970s and definitely during the regime, as a consequence of it.

[2] Despite the fact that the soldier cartoons were carried to *Gırgır* from a previous medium, no reproduction whatsoever of the ones that had already appeared in *Mikrop* took place; on the contrary, the transfer was circumscribed to the concept and format of the strip and the sample published from 1981 onwards was the result of a new production, contemporary to the publication.

Pek left the magazine in 1990.[3] Thus, in the light of this evolution, it is possible to inscribe the sketches about the military that are object of this chapter, namely the ones that appeared in *Gırgır* during the military rule, into a tradition of comic soldier cartoons that Pek himself had initiated and that, as will be argued, were entirely new in the satirical landscape of Turkey.

The first soldier cartoons in *Gırgır*, like the previous ones, did not draw from direct experience of military life as the author had not yet served national service at the time of their creation; nonetheless, it would be incorrect to ascribe them simply to an abstract *clichéd* vision of the subject. On the contrary, in the light of the fact that in a country with such a strong military culture like Turkey the topic of the national service was (and remains) largely present in daily life, these creations drew considerable inspiration from conversations that arose in the most spontaneous ways and circumstances.

In particular, Pek explains,[4] they drew from anecdotes shared by friends and relatives on their return from the required military service. Besides, he adds that, referring to his specific case, growing up in a family of five sons and being the fourth in age inevitably made military service a recurrent theme also within the four walls of his house. Thanks to these circumstances, at the dawn of his soldiers cartoons he already had a rich collection of anecdotes and experiences from his elder brothers that could be adapted to his satirical graphic narrations.

Moreover, parallel to his growing artistic expertise in the *Savaş çok ciddi bir iştir* first and then *Biraz da savaşalım*, Pek developed a personal interest in the technical aspects of the military world. He began to study in depth specific books and magazines that reported on issues of war technology such as the functions and performances of different bullets, or the engineering innovations in the field of military vehicles, just to mention two examples. These articles allowed the author to incorporate accurate details in his sketches.

[3] After resigning Pek embarked on new editorial adventures, from the one that immediately followed, that is *Pişmiş Kelle* (Boiled Sheep's Head, like the homonymous Turkish dish, but also simply Boiled Head, that better describes the logo of the magazine, that shows the head of a smiling young boy attending to a stew pot), to *Leman* (a name chosen for its assonance with the title of its predecessor *Limon*, Lemon; beyond its official meaning of "glittering woman" it actually stands as an abbreviation of *Le Manyak*, The Maniac) where he currently works. The soldiers' saga ended with his exit from *Gırgır*, nonetheless the author kept making caricatures that targeted the military world and warfare, including some that earned him widespread recognition, like the "peace cartoon" dedicated to the Kurdish question that he made for *Leman* in the summer of 2011, titled *Barış ne zaman?* (Peace, when?), which during that same year broke the record for circulation and sharing on the social media.

[4] Behiç Pek, in a private interview with the author (July 14 2014).

In brief, until his actual military leave, the soldier cartoons were the result of his imagination combined with realistic anecdotes and individual research.[5]

General outline of the strip

In an attempt to present a general overview of *Biraz da savaşalım* before delving into a detailed analysis of its content it is possible to claim that between their first appearance in January 1981 and the end of the regime, the soldier cartoons regularly retained their habitual space at the bottom of the thirteenth page of *Gırgır*,[6] where they usually appeared as a horizontal strip or, on some occasions, as a vertical column or in an "L shape" at one of the two (bottom) corners.[7] Such flexibility was made possible by the equally flexible content of the cartoons, which could develop and be accomplished in a single sketch as much as by a sequence of two or three scenes, on very rare occasions even four (like, for instance, the issue of June 14 1981). Thus, each *Biraz da savaşalım* presented to the readership two to four scenes that could be either independent from each other, form a narrative sequence, or be a combination of both options, for example two single caricatures sided by a strip of two.

The protagonists who animated these graphic parodies may be introduced and generally defined as typical characters who belong to the military world. As it will clearly emerge from the analysis these are chiefly the *komutan* (commander) and his various young subordinate soldiers, including pilots of the air force, sailors of the navy, the cook of the squad and various sentries. Furthermore, beyond the trench stands the enemy army with its corresponding equivalent figures, namely the enemy commander and his troops.

Despite the diversity of characters dictated by their roles and ranks, in the majority of these illustrations the protagonists who face the reader are only a few, frequently one or two soldiers who interact with each other or with a superior, either during their training or in specific moments of warfare. At the same time, caricatures that portray more crowded scenes

[5] Pek eventually went on a short-term military service at the age of 30, four years after the end of the regime; despite his short stay of only three months in the barracks, this experience allowed him to live that reality in person and this inevitably influenced his later soldier cartoons, which became more serious and powerful, not to mention realistic.

[6] In October 1983 the strip was temporarily moved to the vertical column of page 6 that had traditionally hosted the *fikralar* (jokes) sent in by the readers and then the caricatures by Sarkis Paçacı. No particular political or editorial reason had led to this move other than the necessity to fill the gap left by the latter in his temporary absence from the magazine caused by a stay abroad.

[7] Only when the strip replaced Paçacı's column would it be displayed vertically along the whole length of the page, exactly like Paçacı's illustrations before it.

exist too, like one of four low ranking officers coming to grips with a captured enemy (November 27 1983), or those ones that represent whole armies fighting against each other (July 19 1981; January 3 1982). Still, these crowded compositions are present on a definitely lesser scale.

Also the setting of these scenes requires a general remark as it is often constituted by wide outdoor spaces that are as anonymous as the soldiers who act within them.[8] This is to say that nowhere in these cartoons is the reader confronted with, say, the Fairy Chimneys of Cappadocia or Mount Ararat, just to mention two landmarks of Turkey's territory. Conversely, military training and war always take place in open lands with no specific identifiers, that alternate mountain landscapes with desert areas that effectively reproduce settings where real military activity could possibly take place.

In the reproduction of moments of exercise these spaces put the soldiers face to face with the harsh conditions that await them once they will be sent to fight in a real conflict, and so do the characters themselves insofar as the reader often comes across comrades in arms simulating the roles of opposite factions confronting each other as part of their training. Then, in the cartoons that put on stage the fragments of actual battles the setting ceases to be a simulation and everything become "real", above all the enemy.[9]

General message and (multiple) meanings

From a general look at the wide range of themes and episodes proposed every week in *Biraz da savaşalım*, it becomes evident that anti-militarism is at the basis of the very same idea of this strip. Let us mention in this respect one of the most symbolic soldier caricatures among the ones that were published under the regime, that is to say the one of "the pacifist officer", as we might call it (Fig. 64). Published among the first ones in *Gırgır*, on January 25 1981, this single illustration portrays an army officer in the act of firmly declaring: "We don't want the war!" The exclamation mark along with the appearance of the speaker, whose eyebrows are set into a frown and whose finger is pointing at the sky, give the impression of a

[8] The meaning and function of the anonymity of these characters will be debated after the cartoon analysis, later on in this chapter.
[9] The sense of realism in this context is determined only as opposed to the status of simulation that characterises the training; accordingly, it would be mistaken to understand it as suggesting that these cartoons mean to reproduce moments of real wars and specific conflicts.

solemn, sincere and strong claim; pity that while pronouncing these words a missile is shot from his mouth almost against his will, in other words automatically and spontaneously.

As Pek himself confirms, visual criticisms of this model were quite common in those years and the soldier whose body "emanated" instruments of war such as bullets, bombs or missiles responded to a specific iconographic criticism of that time. As it will become clear while discussing the other soldier cartoons, in comparison with them this illustration emerges as highly charged with political symbolism and its early appearance in *Gırgır* could lead us to interpret it as a manifesto of the whole strip and of the anti-militarism that drove it. Yet, astonishingly, Pek rejects the claim that the latter lies at the root of its creation.

The author reveals that his initial aim was to create a strip with a childlike touch that would draw the attention of the reader to the young age of its protagonists, to mirror and emphasise the actual young age at which men joined the army, in Turkey and beyond. Pek reveals that two circumstances had pushed him toward the decision to focus on this aspect in particular. One was of a practical nature and consisted in the fact that despite his unquestioned belonging to the cadre of professional illustrators by that time he had not yet fully refined his cartoon art, consequently he felt more at ease with a project that justified a naive line – a "childish" style to stress further the young age of the protagonists – than with a strip based on an extraordinarily subtle and implicit political symbolism. The second circumstance may be seen as empathetic as it translates into the fact that the cartoonist himself was close to the age of twenty, the age when the stage of the military service was or had already been accomplished by the majority of his compatriots. The consequence was that the idea of his peers at the front line in a phase when he perceived himself too young for the barracks, still a boy rather than a man in this respect, had a strong impact on him.

To summarise, practical and emotional considerations during the *Mikrop* phase had led Pek to respond to Ergönültaş's suggestion to create sketches about the military world with cartoons that pointed the finger at the young and immature age of soldiers, so determining the identity of the strip such as it was later maintained in *Gırgır*.

The protagonists of the *Biraz da savaşalım* are in a sort of limbo, for despite having unmistakably passed their childhood they do not appear sufficiently adult to face the military service with the psychological preparation and resolve that this experience demands.[10] For instance, to anticipate two circumstances that will recur throughout the analysis, although they

[10] Note that the expressions "young soldiers" and "low rank soldiers" will be used as synonyms in the following pages.

are aware of the hierarchy in force in the barracks their behaviour toward their commanders shows no sign of the respect that is demanded by a superior; similarly, it may be noticed that they confront conflicts as if they were playing a game, proving that they are not fully aware of the seriousness and danger that warfare implies. Contrary to what may be expected in the light of the cases just mentioned, however, by displaying their inadequacy for military life the intention of the author is not to criticise their attitude nor to attack them, rather to stand by their side, to somehow protect them from the risks hidden in this experience for which they are clearly not yet ready.

At first impression the focus on the young age of soldiers could suggest that the absence of anti-militarism is indeed the driving force of the strip, like the cartoonist in person seems to suggest; however, this idea is soon refuted if we reflect on the fact that the implicit accusation that derives from Pek's role of spokesperson of young inexperienced soldiers is, unmistakably, toward the military system. Better said, the presence of young incompetent soldiers on the battlefield, whose immaturity and inadequate preparation endanger their own lives as much as the destiny of the whole country if, hypothetically, a war were to be fought for real, is a responsibility of the military institution that arms young conscripts and of the state that expects its young men to go on military leave as early as possible.[11] And, in fact, after reflecting with the author on this aspect it emerges that his unease with the connection of his strip to anti-militarism is basically a matter of definition of the latter.

Pek clarifies that while being the initial idea at the basis of the strip, the focus on the young age of his fictional soldiers and on the mistakes that they make as a result carries a deeper message, that is to say it denounces the meaninglessness of the military, of war. The absurd moments and ridiculous situations in which the fictional soldiers find themselves are meant to show the reader that the military is unintelligible: orders are given and executed, wars are initiated and fought, but the reasons, the meaning and the actual goals of these

[11] It is not an exaggeration to say that military service at the age of eighteen was almost taken for granted by the majority of the population at that time. Certainly this was not true for everyone, for instance university students were allowed to postpone their leave to the moment they obtained their degree; it is also true that individuals advocating the right to conscientious objection, whose seed had been cultivated throughout the previous decade, were getting organised to seek legitimation – somehow ironically, given the military culture that, as it is easy to imagine, came to permeate the official discourses in the particular political phase of the regime. That said, for the average young Turk the idea of serving in the army remained an unconditional duty and honour to fulfil as soon as possible: military service made boys into men – turning them into a "good catch" for marriage, and even ideal employees to hire. (This note deliberately chooses not to go into contradictory aspects of the military institution in Turkey, in particular those revolving around the rhetoric of forcing citizens belonging to different ethnic and religious minorities to serve in the army for a state that neglected their diversity and excluded them from the official national discourse. This issue, which is indeed important generally speaking, is here omitted as with respect to the main text the sole point that this digression intends to make is that the military culture so strongly promoted by the Turkish state for decades encouraged the notion that military leave at a young age almost as the only right option.)

actions are unknown to these young soldiers, whose duty is to obey their superiors without asking them – or themselves – why, without seeking an explanation that could justify their hard time in the barracks and on the frontline, including the possibility of one's own death or the killing of an enemy. In *Biraz da savaşalım* the author intends to raise these issues, and through the situations that he depicts he means to drive the reader to the conclusion that military culture is beyond any logic. It is therefore correct to assert that after all anti-militarism is the seed of the strip.

The author's initial unease about the association of his strip with the concept of anti-militarism is disclosed by two considerations that Pek himself brings to light. The first lies in the fact that his target is not necessarily the Turkish army or the armed forces of any other country in particular, rather the military institution in general, with its shared values and beliefs that are common to uniforms anywhere. His second concern calls into question the relationship between thought and action, to put it bluntly, for in this case the cartoonist's hesitation about the anti-militarist label is due to the fact that his soldier cartoons were not conceived with the intention of provoking a specific reaction from the public.

As far as the former is concerned, however, it is important to stress that the representation of an abstract army as it emerges in *Biraz da savaşalım* does not move the strip away from anti-militarism; on the contrary, it places these sketches exactly at the centre of it, at the core of that anti-militarist sentiment that was so strong in those years in Turkey, like elsewhere in the West, and that condemned war unilaterally, all wars, along with the use of weapons and the violence that they carried over. These soldier cartoons with their characters and situations that are intentionally not (only) Turkish perfectly fit that anti-war discourse advocated by the 1968 generation whose main connotation was universality. Although judging from his consideration it seems that the author is not fully aware of this connection, there is a clear *fil rouge* between the senselessness of war that he denounces through his fictional anti-heroes in uniform and that pacifist discourse promoted by the so-called "*jeunesse problématique*" across the world.

Then, regarding the second consideration that Pek makes, it is necessary to recognise that for the simple fact of treating themes particular to the military sphere, these illustrations raised questions and concerns that deliberately or not contributed to a public debate on (anti-)militarism. The latter was certainly not new in Turkey, on the contrary it was a pillar of the heated debate on armaments and war that in the previous decade had forged what could be broadly referred to as Leftist groups (movements, associations, collectives), in other words that Turkish Left that the military junta stepped in to annihilate in 1980.

The two remarks that initially made Pek hesitant about the appropriateness of labelling *Biraz da savaşalım* as anti-militarist and the considerations that then proclaimed the strip unmistakably so lead us toward a reflection on the difference between the intention of the cartoonist and the reception of his work by the public, and above all between the original message that the former meant to express and the further meanings that the sketches came to express in relation to the historical moments, political phases and media contexts that framed their circulation in time.

In the light of the chronology of these soldier cartoons it is possible to identify four eras in their history. The first is, obviously, the one that coincided with the editorial adventure of *Mikrop*, where Pek gave birth to his fictional soldiers experimenting with the association between army and satire for the first time. The second saw its beginning with the transfer of the strip to *Gırgır* that roughly matched the seizure of power of the armed forces, accordingly its end is made to correspond to the military formally stepping back from the political arena three years later. As a consequence, the following phase is deemed to be inaugurated by the return to parliamentary democracy. This one lasted until the author's actual leave for the military service in the late 1980s, that, as explained in the fifth footnote to this chapter, paved the way for an embitterment in his soldiers strip, marking a stronger and more realistic last phase.[12]

The phases that we have identified here are the result of, on the one hand, relevant changes in the author's life and career (the transfer from one magazine to the other, his military leave), and, on the other, of major turning points at national level – while, if we were to establish the different steps based only on the vicissitudes and intentions of the author, three instead of four phases would have determined our chronology.

In this case the second and third would have been considered as a single one, hence becoming the second, that would have been different from the previous period in terms of the name of the strip, the magazine that hosted it, and, presumably, a better ease of the author with his pen, at this point quite expert. Correspondingly, this second phase would have distinguished itself from the following one in terms of content and above all of political

[12] Besides these four it is possible to detect further phases that could mark a continuity between the first original *Savaş çok ciddi bir iştir* strip, later *Biraz da savaşalım*, and the illustrations of the army that Pek has kept creating until present days; however the work of the post-1990 era is not included here as the soldiers cartoons that he realised after his definite leaving of *Gırgır* never turned into an organic and regular strip on the model of the two previous ones.

denounce, that would not have been as strong and critical as those that were to be realized in the following period, that is to say after serving the military for real.

Doubtlessly, this periodisation is hard to object to as it is based on actual events that explicitly modified the soldiers cartoons, first in their style and then in their spirit, to put it simply. Nevertheless, correct as it might be, a classification like this one is not exhaustive, for it fails to recognise the value that came to be added to the strip as a consequence of the "exceptional" circumstances in which it was produced, circulated and read in a particular period.

Considering 1983 as a turning point that marked a scission within what was just introduced as a possible "long second phase" appears necessary to fully acknowledge the merit of this strip, and in particular the strength that it gained under the regime. For, although the author was not creating it with the intention of targeting the junta specifically, it goes without saying that at a time when the armed forces occupied the highest seats of power, a strip that, first, appeared on a successful mainstream magazine, furthermore, already had a political connotation, and, finally, was dedicated to the military world, inevitably became a media weapon against the rulers in uniform.

Willingly or not, under the political circumstances of the regime the soldier cartoons that usually treated the sphere of the armed forces came to deal with the ruling class at the same time, joining the array of political challenges that *Gırgır*'s satire came to pose to the junta. The division of the chronology of the soldier cartoons into four phases allows us to recognize the extraordinary importance of *Biraz da savaşalım* during the military triennium and to focus exactly on this aspect.

Soldiers portraits under the regime

As it was discussed above, the young age of the soldiers and their struggles with life in the barracks are pointed out to suggest the overall meaninglessness of the military and to ultimately condemn the practices of war. This is, in one sentence, the axis along which the *Biraz da savaşalım* develops.

The focus of the single scenes presented in the strip oscillates among the different shades that compose this line, so the reader might come across young soldiers who flee in fear once they find themselves face to face with the enemy (January 25 1981) as much as a sadistic air force unit that releases a firebomb with the exclusive aim of then using the fire

caused by the explosion to cook a good meal (June 7, 1981), just to mention two examples.[13] It will now be shown that the facets through which criticism develops along this narrative line are multiple and do not spare any aspect of military life.

The soldier cartoons were essentially parodies of men in uniform, a satirical model that we encounter in this work for the first time. In fact, what distinguishes them from the illustrations that were discussed in the previous chapters is the fact that whereas, generally speaking, criticism of the military as rulers was expressed through caricatures that either exaggerated or oversimplified the behind the scenes as well as the consequences of incompetent, unfair and ridiculous domestic policies, denouncing the junta as oppressors was expressed through hard-hitting representations of the practices and consequences of repression on its victims, in this case the calling into question of the army on the battlefield is articulated along an imitation of military activities that discredits their virtues instead of extolling them. These parodies bring the reader face to face with soldiers who let their own personality and emotions prevail over the firmness demanded by their mission, who make mistakes and who are definitely far from the virtuous men in uniform who were usually paid homage to by history books, statues and public events.

A first broad categorisation of these cartoons may be made according to the rank of their characters in the military hierarchy. In fact, the most evident difference that emerges at an overall glance at this rich output concerns the actual targets of the sketches, who are in some cases high rank officers, on many other occasions simple soldiers and, more rarely, all ranks together. This is not to say that in the first and second groups only commanders and soldiers respectively are portrayed, rather this distinction is made on the ground of who among the various men in uniform that act in each scene is actually made object of the satire. So, in the following pages we will often come across situations where representatives of different ranks are portrayed side by side, but only one of them is the specific victim of the cartoonist's joke.

[13] As a follow up to the third footnote in this chapter let us add that in the light of his personal interest and research on war technology Pek always updated his soldier cartoons according to war innovations. So, while in the illustrations that are debated in this chapter the highest step of war violence is occupied by the neutron bomb, whose invention and use fuelled the public opinion in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the ones that he created later in *Gırgır* as well as in the following magazines that hosted his work mirrored the upgrade of war instruments and techniques to always more sophisticated tools and weapons; thus the neutron bomb was progressively replaced by air missiles, drones, etc.

The cartoons that centred on high rank officers tend to stress the pitfalls of these men in their official roles, both as instructors of fresher soldiers and as leaders of troops who conduct a war. However, these portraits are not limited to their professional performance and often involve their character and personality. Let us disclose how this transition takes place.

The most obvious way in which commanders are hit in these scenes is the one that simply narrates their failure in achieving their military mission, which could consist of the essential task of teaching their subordinates to respect them as much as of, obviously, winning a battle. An example of this trend is a very simple yet incisive scene that was published on November 28 1982 (Fig. 65), where six high rank officers are holding a roundtable to discuss the success that they have recently achieved. The moment looks very serious, formal and to a certain degree tense, judging from the fact that none of them has put his hands on the table, maintaining a rigid posture that reveals uneasiness. The source of this tension is a dead fish that has been placed on the centre of the table and which they are all staring at, whose meaning is disclosed by the words one of them utters: "I don't think that with our maritime forces we achieved much more than taking this fish".

Whatever mission he refers to, his statement implicitly admits that the operation was a total failure and despite the military equipment at their disposal the marine troops have done worse than a fisherman. Fictional situations in the model of this one simply brought the reader face to face with the failings of the armed forces, interestingly renouncing any sort of moral judgement on the part of the author. We may derive that the latter seems well aware that the mere idea of a defeat is itself sufficiently humiliating for the commanders who have led the expedition and for the military institution in general.[14]

Aware of their inability to achieve success by standard means, these officers may well be ready to recur to subterfuges to cheat the enemy and emerge victorious. This possibility is openly denounced, for instance, in a cartoon that appeared in *Gırgır* on September 27 1981 (Fig. 66), which presents a situation where a general has invited his enemy counterpart to a face-to-face meeting with the official aim of discussing a peace treaty, as he affirms while welcoming him.

[14] In the light of the particular political moment that framed the creation and publication of this sketch and given the situation depicted, which, rather exceptionally, is not set in a military field and does not show a moment of training or war, one could easily recognise the five men of the junta in these protagonists and be encouraged to interpret the whole scene as a metaphor of their overall failure. However, as appealing as this interpretation looks, Pek denies this, explaining that these characters do not represent any military figures in particular. Behiç Pek, in a private interview with the author (July 14 2014).

The host has prepared a small table with a coffee set that leads the viewer to believe that he hopes the encounter will unfold in a pleasant and peaceful manner, suggesting an intention to facilitate the resolution of their negotiations toward a positive agreement on the conflict that sees them employed on opposite sides; however, three details imply a less peaceful outcome. First of all, while welcoming his guest he does not hide an unpleasant sneer that suggests an aggressive attitude and treacherous intentions; furthermore, no chairs have been arranged for the encounter – an absence, this one, that is metaphor of unpleasant developments, or, at least, of an uncomfortable situation; finally, the host sets about to serve the drink from a kettle whose shape reveals a gun is enclosed within, which definitely breaks the illusion of a peaceful conversation making clear his intention to threaten his interlocutor.

Evidently, these circumstances are in clear contrast with the spirit required by negotiations, and above all the detail of the weapon unveils the dishonest intentions and techniques of the Turkish general, who is breaking the code of behaviour required in such circumstances. What this illustration strongly denounces is not just the aggressive, violent and intimidating attitude of this character but also the fact that his decisiveness to not keep his word will cause an infringement of the military code. This is possibly the most challenging accusation and provocation that could be directed at someone who holds a respectable position, as it ultimately reveals that he is a man without honour.

The inability of these commanders to be as successful as they wish and as allegedly their people expects them to be is source of a deep frustration that they decide to reverse on their subordinates. Concerning the gap between the actual achievements (or, better said, lack of them) of these officers and the expectations that the people put in them, although there is no explicit mention of this in the strip it is nonetheless impossible not to be reminded of the national military figure *par excellence*, the early Atatürk, that is to say the one in uniform who was named Gazi (Ghazi, victorious fighter), whose military conquests at the dawn of the Turkish state set the foundation for the model of a brave, virtuous, charismatic and successful army leader. Indeed, the archetype of soldier set by the venerated general left a powerful heritage in the collective consciousness of the nation, yet also a heavy burden to later generations of generals to be confronted with, for the sense of not being up to their predecessor is conceivably always at play. The cartoons that revolve around the frustrations of generals confirm *tout court* the inadequacy of contemporary ones.

To conclude this brief reflection on the shadow of Atatürk over fictional army officers before turning to the illustrations themselves, let us make clear that the unmentioned allusion

to a comparison between the former and the latter may be deemed present in all the illustrations of the *Biraz da savaşalım*; nonetheless, its burden seems to increase above all in the caricatures that insist on the generals' frustration insofar as there is little doubt that there the latter's weakness emerges more evidently.

Moreover, in these cartoons the said weakness manifests itself not in a humble way, which could in the end rouse understanding and compassion; conversely it is deliberately thrown at the lower rank soldiers who have done nothing to deserve mistreatment and humiliation at the hands of their superiors. To some extent, it could be claimed that whereas, on the one hand, the idea of a military defeat could still be contemplated and accepted by the public opinion and, after all, unfair and dishonest as they might be subterfuge too might be deemed part of the wide range of warfare dynamics, on the other hand the idea of generals' human weakness being reversed not against the enemy, but on the contrary against members of their own troops is harder to accept and forgive, as it could have a "boomerang effect" that puts the troops in danger.

The "frustration cartoons", as they could be named, unmask precisely the psychological violence to which soldiers are subjected by their superiors, definitely emphasising the fact that this attitude is totally unnecessary and unjust. For example, in a sketch that dates to January 3 1982 (Fig. 67) the reader is faced with a soldier who has just finished peeling a considerable quantity of potatoes, so many that while piled together they form a mound that is as tall as him. It is evident that such effort, which must have taken several hours, was demanded by the order of a superior; despite that, he is now being approached by an officer, in all likelihood the same one responsible for the order, who commands: "Paste back the peel on the potatoes! Today *imambayıldı*[15] will be made!" So, the menu has now changed and all of a sudden the peeled potatoes are of no use.

The first element that draws attention in the officer's statement is the rude tone that he uses to the soldier, who is not guilty of any mistake and hence has nothing to be reproached for. Realistically, it is improbable that a superior would apologise to a subordinate for the waste of time and effort that he has caused him, yet such an aggressive attitude appears totally unfounded.

Second, the change of menu at the last minute seems somewhat surprising in a context like the military one, where everything is pre-arranged and conforms to precise schemes of

[15] Sometimes written as two separate words, *imambayıldı* or *imam bayıldı* is a typical Turkish dish based on eggplant that does not require the use of potatoes.

planning and order; in any case, let us imagine that, though rarely, circumstances like the one depicted here may happen.

Third, the new task that the officer assigns brings the whole situation to a ridiculously absurd level, for, firstly, there is no sense in "de-peeling" the potatoes, which could surely be used for the next meal; secondly, for obvious reasons such an action is impossible; and, thirdly, in the (impossible) chance that potatoes could be "de-peeled" this activity would require an enormous amount of time, energy and patience, which could be better spent on other, more useful activities.

Overall, the order reveals a sadistic pleasure on the part of the officer in assigning impossible and senseless tasks to their subordinates for the mere pleasure of "playing" with them and, consequently, to assert, or rather confirm to themselves, their own power position.

What is also illogical is the treatment to which another commander subjects a soldier in a cartoon that was published on January 24 1982 (Fig. 68). Here, according to the words pronounced by the officer, it can be derived that the subordinate has approached him to bring to his attention the fact that the military boots that he was assigned along with the uniform are too big for his feet. In fact, the answer that the superior is angrily shouting while shaking his fist in the air is "Hey, what should we do if your boot is big... are we [maybe] at a shoe-shop? Get out!..", to which the other submissively replies "All right my commander..." and moves away.

Interestingly, the readers cannot see the soldier; they can only glance at the boot, from which his answer comes out (in a balloon), hinting that he is speaking from within the footwear, hence he is totally hidden inside it. In sum, the boots are so big he can fit his whole body in one of them.[16] However, despite its definitely excessive size that hampers the soldier's view, movement and to some degree also his breath, the commander refuses to help his situation and does not hesitate to leave him in this surreal situation that from a practical point of view renders him completely useless as a soldier – who can neither train nor fight. Regarding this aspect it is fair to claim that, in the end, the officer has decided to let his own power position prevail in a negative and counterproductive way, to the detriment of the common good of his squad, which is now deprived of a soldier due to his whim of affirming himself and the weight of his uniform by means of arrogant and illogical orders.

[16] The action of moving away from the commander as a result of his order is expressed through the direction of the boot, which is turned toward the opposite side of the man and is jumping away from him; the jumps are visually expressed thanks to two thin curved lines drawn at the back of the boot to show its movement and trajectory.

Before abandoning this caricature let us reflect on the language of its protagonists and in particular on the words chosen by the low rank soldier. The latter rightly addresses his superior by using the word *komutan*, which is the one that corresponds to his actual rank; nevertheless, the way he phrases it breaks the standards of military discipline, as the vocative form and the possessive pronoun that he decides to adopt translate into a highly informal "my commander".

In addition, the word in the balloon is spelled so as to lower the degree of formality further, since the correct form "komutanım" is here replaced by "komtanım". The missing "u" in the spelling reveals that the respect demanded by the military hierarchy and required in this specific situation is totally ignored.

This and other words mangled in a similar way recur quite often in the *Biraz da savaşalım* and, far from being a typing error or printing mistake, they actually carry two different meanings that perfectly conform to the general criticism that the author intends to make through this strip, and that was elucidated earlier in this chapter.

The first way that misspelling on the part of low rank soldiers should be interpreted is as a linguistic device to emphasise the young age and childish attitude of these men. In this respect the "komtanım" could be compared to the informal and contracted "örtmenim" form for "öğretmenim", literally "my teacher", used by young students in other cartoons as much as in reality.

The other interpretation of this specific vocative form is as a linguistic device to suggest that these soldiers do not take orders seriously, not because they are too young to understand the notion of hierarchical respect but because the orders that they receive are, in Pek's words, "saçma sapan şeyler"[17], literally utterly nonsensical, and deliberately so, which makes them unworthy of serious attention. This interpretation offers an interesting glimpse into the possibility that low rank soldiers elaborated their own forms of resistance against their superiors, hence against the military system; however, we should be cautious with this statement insofar as it is significantly distant from the general message and meaning of the strip.

In any case, though starting from different assumptions, both interpretations converge on the fact that the absence of formality corresponds to lack of respect. The latter is in one case unintentional while in the other premeditated, but in the end, for one reason (young age)

[17] Behiç Pek, in a private interview with the author (July 14 2014).

or the other (lack of logic behind the orders assigned), it points the finger at the senselessness of military rules, hierarchies and authoritarianism.

The illustrations that portray the outburst of commanders' frustration on the members of their troop raise a question of efficiency of these humiliating methods on the overall performance of the unit, as they suggest that such treatment does not help create a peaceful environment or improve the morale of the soldiers. Whether strict discipline, fear and threat of punishment are beneficial to the motivation of soldiers and to the overall performance of the squad or not is an old, never-ending issue that will not be debated here; nevertheless, this doubt spontaneously leads us toward the following cartoon trend, that seems to argue answer against these methods.

In these illustrations the habits and whims of high rank officers emerge as the cause of poor military performances as well as defeats that could have been easily avoided by simply relying on common sense. For example, a cartoon that was published on September 6 1981 portrays a military aircraft which is "jumping" on the ground instead of flying; the reason for this unusual trajectory is revealed by the order that the commander on board is giving to the pilot, that is: "I don't conceive of things like 'we're out of fuel' I say jump!.. Jump more…" (Fig. 69). Similarly, in a sketch that appeared on November 14 1982, an officer is seriously upset at a soldier who informs him that the enemy is approaching, and shouts: "I don't conceive of things like 'the enemies are coming'... I order that they go back immediately..."[18] (Fig. 70).

In both cases the commanders refuse to accept the "bad news" with which they are confronted and to treat them as objective facts to face and react to, that do not depend on their subordinates' will; instead, they prefer to waste time and energy blaming the latter, while doing nothing constructive. This attitude will certainly harm their own army as shouting at the young soldiers is obviously no solution to the state of emergency of which they are informed, neither to the lack of fuel nor to the advance of the enemy. In the cartoons of this trend the tantrums of high rank soldiers are manifestly condemned, not only insofar as they generate a tense and unhappy environment, as was the case of the previous set of images, but also and above all because these men lose sight of their priorities and missions making their army vulnerable, hence, potentially, putting their country in danger.

[18] It is interesting that the language used by the arrogant officers is the same in both illustrations, though this is only a coincidence of these two scenes that were chosen as examples for the analysis and it would be incorrect to suppose that the form "I don't conceive things like ..." is detected in all the cartoons of this style.

The inadequate attitude of troop leaders is put forward again in the following trend of officer cartoons, possibly even more critically. In fact, while in the illustrations that were just discussed the characters' bad tempers were caused by actual problems, in the following examples it will emerge that the reasons for subjecting subordinate officers to a violent treatment are null; more correctly, they simply do not exist.

In order to understand this apparently strange claim let us consider, for instance, the strip that dates to June 14 1981, which was mentioned above as a rare example in the *Biraz da savaşalım* of strips made of four scenes (Fig. 71). In the first one, a soldier and his commander have parachuted from a military aircraft and are floating in the air; in the following one, it becomes clear that the low rank soldier is going to touch the ground faster than the officer and a surprised, almost panicking expression appears on the face of the latter; in the third, the former is getting rid of the parachute while his superior is touching the ground with a look that denotes humiliation and worry; finally, his apparent docility suddenly turns into rage and the commander starts to slap the soldier's face repeatedly (the onomatopoeic "şak şuk!" written above the line that indicates the movement of his hand emphasises the strength of his slaps) while reproaching him: "hey disrespectful scoundrel! Why did you land before me, eh!?"

It goes without saying that, first, the order with which they touched the ground was a pure coincidence, and, second, it has no importance at all as they are not racing; however, the commander cannot accept having been outdone by his subordinate and reacts in a way that shows that he, too, has a childish attitude notwithstanding his age and experience. His reaction definitely makes one wonder about his priorities, and, of course, about his virtues and ability to command a squad.

A variation on this theme is provided by some illustrations in which the reasons for giving subordinate officers a violent treatment are not inexistent but, worse, they are caused by the commanders themselves. This is the case, for example, of a brilliant scene that appeared on the *Biraz da savaşalım* corner on June 28 1981 (Fig. 72), where a commander and a soldier are vividly discussing the matter of a military tank that lies upside down behind them. Obviously, there has been an accident that led the tank to that position and what emerges from the dialogue is that the person responsible for that is not the low rank soldier but, surprisingly, his superior.

The latter is fully aware that the former is not to be blamed; yet, used as he is to violent reproaches he cannot avoid getting angry at someone and, since the only choice is between the soldier and himself, he decides to shout in rage at the other: "Hey, what a clumsy fellow I am! I turned down such a gigantic tank... take this!" These words are sealed by a violent slap – "şak" – on the poor soldier's face, to which, despite all, the unfortunate replies: "Ah! Uf! Don't beat [me] my general, you will never do it again!..".

It is probably not exaggerated to claim that with this scene the *Biraz da savaşalım* reaches its highest level of surprise effect and absurdity as the reader is faced with a general who has committed an unmistakably significant faux pas and who, strangely enough, is ready to admit it and confess it loudly; nonetheless, unable to accept the idea of being the source of something imperfect he recurs to the habit of easy violence to which he is certainly addicted, so he vents all his frustration on the unfortunate subordinate who has no complicity at all in his pitfall.

In brief, what emerges in the last two caricatures is that the ego of high rank officers is so self-fed and excessive, and the level of their general incompetence as much as the extent of their insolence, coercion and senselessness is so high, that they are capable of anything. Likewise, the low ranks, aware of this, are ready to accept any kind of treatment. The higher the rank the heavier and more unjust the behaviour toward the subordinates; in the end, this is the vicious circle of the soldier who rises up in the military hierarchy and repays to the lower ranks sometimes the frustrations, sometimes the genuine cruelty and power abuses to which he was subject at an earlier stages of his career, as if a military system deprived of these dynamics were inconceivable.

Let us clarify that these men are not always portrayed as sadists; conversely, on some occasions they are also presented to the readership as vulnerable and complex men. This image determines the last trend of the cartoons that see the high rank officers as protagonists. Representative of this trend is a scene that was published on January 18 1981 (Fig. 73), which displays a commander who has climbed on the shoulders of a man to assign an harshly pronounced order to a soldier; the reason behind the choice of this unusual position is his uneasiness with his own short height, as we learn through the comment of the "base man", who complains that "oh boy, because of this commander's complex we are wiped out!..".

It could be imagined that for shedding light on their weaknesses and uncertainties the "complex cartoons" unveil the simplicity and humanity of these men, their being ordinary people like anyone else; however, this is actually not the case since the fears portrayed, in this

case a complex about height, do not make these officers more gentle and humble. On the contrary they make them even more arrogant and aggressive toward the subordinates who do not share the same misfortune and problems; in fact, in the illustration mentioned the commander orders the soldier to “attention!” with an angry glance and intimidating body language (the hands closed in two fists). Yet, ironically, the fact that he feels the need to climb on a high surface to look frightening in the eyes of his troops makes him appear ridiculous.

To summarise, the portraits of high rank officers are not limited to offering a mere evaluation of the military performances of these men, on the contrary they engage in a rich exploration of their psychology that does not simply and superficially place these protagonists under the broad umbrella of power abuse and arrogance of the uniform. For, what emerges is a rich representation of cases that explore different aspects of the thoughts and dynamics that are at play in the daily interaction of these men with subordinates and enemies.

The graphic enquiry into the psychological nuances of officers’ behaviour is so accurate, thorough and diversified that their categorisation according to different grades becomes possible, as the analysis shows. Beyond their psychological peculiarities, then, the common and most crucial feature of these fictional commanders is that most of the time they are unsuccessful due to their own inefficiency and haughtiness, which drags them into difficult situations and mistakes that could have been easily avoided. For them, the cartoonist contemplates no absolution whatsoever.

The climax of failures that is disclosed in the caricatures dedicated to high rank officers takes a different path in the illustrations that target their subordinates. Here, in fact, rather than defining the narrative pattern as a climax that leads the reader toward the pick of the complicated psychology of the protagonists, it is correct to state that the satirical portraits follow a scheme that lays bare the discouraging inability of low rank soldiers in every aspect of the challenges that military life poses to them with no particular ascending emphasis, since, as a matter of fact, all these aspects come to light as almost equally surprising and serious.

A structured narrative sequence that emerges as particularly effective in discrediting the soldiers can be reconstructed in the section of cartoons that portray them during actual moments of war. All the same, having here above illustrated the excessive mistreatment to which the latter are subject by their superiors, let us open the analysis of the “low rank soldiers cartoons” with their reactions to such treatment, which will then be followed by a

global examination of the representation of these characters in which the said narrative sequence is inscribed.

The general attitude that emerges vis-à-vis the unpredictable temper of officers is a frightened one, which induces the young soldiers to repress their instinct to respond to the groundless mistreatment of which they are victims. Aware of the power relations that rule in the barracks, the young men in uniform do not dare to complain among their fellows, let alone openly to their superiors; at the same time, the uneasy environment that the latter create with their presumption is not easily accepted and on some occasions it encourages some outbursts.

As a matter of fact, these outbursts are extremely rare and generally useless insofar as they do not pave the way for an improvement in the relations between high and low ranks, as is clearly shown in an illustration (Fig. 74), published on October 30 1983, showing a soldier who shouts, but only after having joined the peak of a mountain in the middle of nowhere, far away from the ears of the frightening commander: “Heey enough tweeerp!.. If you are a commander.. er.. er learn your commandership.. ip ip. I don’t peel potatoes… es!..” The echo suggested by the repetition of the last syllable of some of his words reveals that he has chosen a deserted place (deliberately, for fear) to express his rage and that not even a hint of his discontent will ever reach the commander in question, with the result that nothing will change and in all likelihood he will find himself peeling potatoes again and again.

Interestingly, some cartoons offer a different perspective that makes them worth mentioning despite being extremely limited in number – only two. In these scenes the cartoonist depicts soldiers in the act of intentionally transgressing rules. So, in the strip that appeared on January 10 1982 (Fig. 75) two of them have a laugh at their commander’s expense by imitating him, while in the sketch that dates October 16 1983 (Fig. 76) another one has been playing football during his shift.

It is not incorrect to deem these activities attempts to rebel against the rigid order of the barracks and above all the pastime depicted in the first is indeed courageous as it challenges the traditionally unquestioned respect for the superiors. Yet, these two acts of bravery ultimately end up in a negative outcome as in both cases the transgressors are caught and harshly reproached by the superiors. Namely, in the first one the commander runs after them to take back his peculiar helmet that the two have stolen from him to make the imitation more efficient, and in the second the ball that the guard has nowhere to hide reveals the truth to the officer.

In sum, despite the commendable desire to rebel against imposed hierarchies and strict rules, it is evident that the courage that these young soldiers manifest is not sufficient since, in the end, they are not cunning enough (to realise that it is safer to provide the same imitation without stealing accessories that actually belong to the target of the joke, and to make sure that in case of an inspection the ball can be hidden somewhere) to pose a real challenge to the troop leaders.

While the relationship with the superiors has a manifestly complicated and erratic nature as it is a source of tension, hence unnatural and repressed behaviour, the attitude of young soldiers changes when they are left alone or with colleagues of the same rank, in other words when they are free to express themselves spontaneously. Thus, let us investigate how these soldiers appear, in general, when they are alone.

Their young age and childish attitude that Pek means to emphasise is doubtlessly a prominent feature that emerges clearly and can be detected to different extents in all illustrations. In some scenes this appears as the main and only aspect that the author wishes to portray, as in the case of a soldier who has attached two small side wheels to the tank that he is learning to drive for fear that the vehicle could overturn, exactly like a child who is learning to ride a bicycle at a very young age using stabilisers (October 9 1983, Fig. 77). Another example is a cartoon where three young soldiers have been entrusted with installing the flag on the top of a hill and opt for the flag of their favourite football team instead of the national one (October 16 1983, Fig. 78).

However, the majority of illustrations dedicated to low rank soldiers go further, showing critical aspects of their performances that seem to leave little room to simply accept and justify their behaviour and pitfalls as a result of their young age, for let us always keep in mind that the realistic counterpart of these fictional characters are not children but young men around the age of twenty.

To begin with, soldiers are fearful beyond expectations, to the extent that they are not able to stand even the idea of facing an enemy, as is shown in a strip where as part of their training two members of the same troop are ordered to simulate the roles of two soldiers of opposite armies, but, instead of fighting accordingly, they both run away in opposite directions scared, shouting “Mummyyy!..” – raising enormous doubts about their mental preparation to fight for real (January 25 1981, Fig. 79).

In the second place, they are lazy, to the extent that they look for ways to avoid exertion even in the most critical situations and moments of war, as it is testified by a cartoon published on November 27 1983 (Fig. 80) in which a soldier who needs to advance onto the battlefield without detection from the enemy lies on a big snake that is slithering in the direction he needs to go rather than crawling on the ground himself (as another soldier is doing – and the other soldier, unsurprisingly, complains about the excessive and unscrupulous laziness of his colleague).

Moreover, the soldiers are shown as truly incapable of fulfilling their duties, to a degree that does not even seem possible, at is lamented through an illustration dated January 3 1982 (Fig. 81), where a young man in uniform is training with target shooting, at which he is a total disaster. His trainer, who is evidently aware of his difficulties, has placed ten targets all around him in the hope that he will at least hit one of them, if only by accident. Yet, unbelievably, despite the almost impossible chance to miss the target, this is exactly what happens once again, to the trainer's disbelief.

The general inability of soldiers emerges even more vividly in the moments of actual conflict. In the cartoons that treat this topic the nature of criticism changes compared to the last mentioned category, for, whereas there the incapability of the characters was connected to activities that specifically belong to the military world and that not necessarily everyone is inclined towards, like target shooting, this time the errors that they commit cross the military realm and become a matter of common sense, it is not exaggerated to say of intelligence. In other words, although this claim implies a remarkable difference between our reading of the cartoons and the intentions of the author, it is undeniable that in a relevant number of sketches the soldiers emerge as, simply, stupid.

In addition, judging from the amount of cartoons that highlight this aspect one could go as far as claiming that this is even the prevailing message of the "low rank soldier cartoons", indeed an ironic circumstance given its distance from the intentions with which Pek was realising the *Biraz da savaşalım*. This gap definitely encourages a reflection on the crucial issue of the bias between the author's intention and perception(s) of the readership that was discussed earlier in this chapter and that will be treated again after the analysis.

As it was introduced above, the depiction of the pitfalls of young soldiers is so careful to include all aspects of their military life when it comes to moments of conflict that its examination may easily develop along a sequential narrative pattern that does not spare any aspect of warfare. Let us also make clear that each aspect is treated in an exhaustive sample of

illustrations whose quantity removes any possible doubt about some of them being treated as side issues. In other words, the incompetence of soldiers comes to light insistently on every front.

The first evident difficulty of low rank soldiers is in finding their own place and understanding their role within their squad, as well as in relation to the enemy. What am I supposed to do and where am I going?, seem to be the essential questions that they repeatedly ask themselves, as if even the basic tasks of distinguishing allies from adversaries and sticking with their own troops were too hard for them. Sometimes their disorientation is so deep that it takes them to the point of literally getting lost, as a cartoon dating June 21 1981 reveals by presenting a man in uniform who finds himself alone in the middle of a residential area and asks of a passer-by: “Pssst hey brother, have you seen an army around here? Have you seen my army?” (Fig. 82).

While in theory the fact of a soldier getting lost could potentially pave the way for an interpretation of war as an alienating experience, three clues in this illustration prove that here the bewilderment is real and the point that the scene makes is a different one. First, the questions that the soldier poses are not of general and abstract nature, on the model of, say, “where am I?” and “what am I doing here?” On the contrary, they are practical and precise since they refer to a specific army. Furthermore, visual details such as the fact that the street is clean and tidy, that a car appears on the background, that the buildings that compose the skyline look well preserved, and that a man (the interlocutor) is walking normally in the street hint that the protagonist is in a town where there is no conflict, meaning that he is “out of place”. Finally, the quizzical expression depicted on the face of the local man as a reaction to the unusual question that he is asked shows that the possibility of a troop being in the environs is totally unexpected to him, revealing that not only is the soldier lost for real but also very far from where he should be.

The last clue raises doubts as the general intellect of this man, for, if, on the one hand, a failure in following the commander and the rest of the troop could perhaps be plausible during a conflict, on the other, the large distance this protagonist has covered without being aware of following the wrong direction appears quite dramatic. Disgraceful as it might sound, this leads us to question his intelligence, which, as a matter of fact, another feature in the illustration discredits quite clearly.

Reference is here made to his words, which seem to take for granted that the passer-by knows which army he belongs to as they do not include a hint of any distinguishing feature of

his troop (i.e. a detail on their uniforms). Asking where is “my army” to a stranger denotes incapacity on the part of this speaker to relate to people who do not belong to his world, suggesting that his problems are not confined to understanding his role and, literally, his location within the troop, but enter the sphere of intellect as such.

Soldiers who eventually manage not to get lost during conflicts show ineptitude that may be even more astonishing than the one that was just discussed. For example, they are not able to distinguish between members of their own army and adversaries, to the extent that by mistake they shoot down aircrafts of their own troops (September 6 1981, Fig. 83).

At the same time, when they advance on areas where the enemy is not physically close, so it is evident that they should not even try to attack other soldiers since it is certain that they are colleagues, the easiness with which they advance does not prevent them from committing false moves that have a boomerang effect on the squad. For example, in a cartoon published on September 4 1983 (Fig. 84) two soldiers who are driving a tank report a strange noise that suggests them that the vehicle has some problems, while in fact it is the groan of a colleague whom they have run over without even noticing.

The actual encounter with the enemy presents its own peculiarities too and is the umpteenth example of the soldiers’ ineptitude, as an illustration of September 12 1982 clearly exemplifies (Fig. 85). Here a soldiers has reached the border of the enemy’s territory and is stopped by a sentry who obviously asks him the password that allows access through the check-point. Despite the predictability of this request, evidently the soldier is unprepared, since he shouts, in a fit of rage: “How do I know your password mate! As if you would know mine if I asked you...”

In so doing, the soldier reveals, first, a complete lack of knowledge of the basic rules of war, second, an inability to control his nerves at the first obstacle, which lead to an excessively agitated reaction, and third, a lack of astuteness that could have eventually led him to a wiser reply which, though probably not successful in granting him access to the check-point, could have at least earned him some time to conceive a plan.

This encounter between enemies was indeed a “peaceful” one; however, this is not always the case. The capture of soldiers marks a more conflictual moment as it paves the way for dramatic decisions that affect the fate of single enemy soldiers directly, and that, as a consequence, can also have decisive effects on the destiny of the troop as a whole.

In theory, the presence of hostages could be exploited to negotiate control over territories and even to set forth the end of a war; still, it goes without saying that this depends on the ability of soldiers to deal with the situation, first and foremost with hostages themselves. Predictably, in *Biraz da savaşalım* this emerges as a difficult task that brings the reader face to face with the most unimaginable scenes.

Our protagonists are so clumsy that even when they manage to capture a hostage – surprisingly, given their overall ineptitude – they are not necessarily able to assert their authority over him despite their advantaged position. The most typical and frequently portrayed problems are of a tactical nature and consist of the inability of soldiers to keep the captured enemy under control and establish their dominant position firmly.

This is the case of a caricature published on October 16, 1983 (Fig. 86) that portrays a hostage in the act of running away from the troop that has just caught him. The scene that is presented to the reader consists in a squad into the fray in the background, with at least six soldiers lying fallen on the ground, their weapons spread all around them, and their tank turned upside down. On the foreground, their hostage is quickly moving away from the group, leaving his captors at the mercy of their commander who desperately shouts “Stand up stupid! You were unable to cope with one prisoner!”

The scene of a single hostage prevailing over a group of enemies is indeed astonishing and it becomes even more so in the light of the condition of the former, that is to say with a thick, long rope that ties his arms to his chest in a way that prevents a wide range of movements, not least the use of his arms. This detail makes a fight with his captors, the overturning of their tank and his escape almost impossible, and yet this is exactly what has taken place. In conclusion, the scene suggests that soldiers are so inept that they manage to emerge as losers even when it would seem impossible for them to fail.

When soldiers manage to overcome problems of a tactical nature, hence prevent hostages’ attempts to run away bringing them to their base camp successfully, new difficulties emerge that make the relationship between members of enemy factions more complicated. Such problems may be ascribed to a lack of common sense rather than to strategic pitfalls and consist in the confusion that low rank soldiers make in recognising their superiors as their authority.

In a strip dating January 17 1982 (Fig. 87), a hostage is about to be executed by the rifle of a soldier under the supervision of his commander. The latter orders his subordinate to get ready to shoot; however, just after his “atteeentiooon”, the hostage dares to give the

counter-order “at eeease!”, to which the young soldier surprisingly obeys putting the rifle away. At first glance, the reader is prompted to understand the soldier’s obedience as derived by a certain confusion between the voice of his superior and the one of the hostage; after all, this could be a possibility. Nevertheless, a closer examination of the whole scene reveals that this is not the case since, as a matter of fact, the enraged words of the commander that follow as a reaction reveal that the confusion is much deeper. “Hey, if you meddle once more I’ll ruin you!.. We’ve been dealing with you since this morning...”, he says, revealing that this is not the first time that this has happened, hence that the soldier entrusted with the shooting has been repeating the same mistake. In the best case, this means that the latter keeps being confused between the voice of his superior and that of the hostage, while, in the worst case, the truth is that he is so used to following orders without ever questioning them that he obeys like a machine no matter who has given them. Either case seems quite unbelievable and poses serious doubts about his understanding of his role, and, once again, his intelligence as a whole.

While close and direct interaction with enemies seems to always result in a disaster, things do not get better when soldiers go back to long distance fight, as the latter implies the handling of war vehicles. The difficulties met by soldiers in riding tanks, vessels, helicopters and airplanes are hardly justified by the actually sophisticated skills required for that purpose, for the drivers and pilots in question have supposedly received training before being sent to the battlefield. Rather, the mistakes that they so frequently commit are rooted in their own understanding of their functioning, that is sometimes illogical and sometimes totally wrong.

Wrong, for instance, is the belief that a volcano is like any other mountain that can be flown over at close distance with no specific concern for the heat that its crater emanates, as in a cartoon published on November 13 1983 (Fig. 88) where a young pilot has simply neglected the need to increase the altitude of his plane before approaching a smoking peak, with the result that at the passage the bottom of the aircraft has melted.

Illogical, then, is their conception of the functioning of these vehicles, as it is exemplified by a caricature dating September 13 1981 (Fig. 89) in which a low rank officer proudly shows the commander his own creation, which consists in an airplane that he has intentionally deprived of the wings and tail. As he himself explains, the benefit of such invention is that “since it does not fly there is no risk that it will crash”.[19]

[19] Although this digression could lead the main argument slightly off track, let us acknowledge that the relationship between low rank soldiers and war vehicles holds a special place in the *Biraz da savaşalım* since it

Despite all the mistakes that these low rank soldiers make and the unfavourable vicissitudes that they experience, the author seems willing to give them the benefit of victory from time to time, for in some caricatures they are portrayed as prevailing over their enemies, either in the act of defeating them tactically or in the moment in which they effectively conquer a land. However, such positive outcomes should not mislead the reader into an interpretation of these scenes as praise of troops that have accomplished their mission, for, by contrast, even these sketches result in occasions to discredit the conception of military virtue that potentially could, but should not, be attributed to the authors of these military successes (anyway, the latter may be imagined to be rare given the general clumsiness that characterises their authors).

A clear example of this trend is an illustration that appeared on the *Biraz da savaşalım* of October 30, 1983 (Fig. 90) and that focuses on the act of planting the flag in the soil that was just conquered, as a mark of the recent victory to show all the enemies to whom that space now belongs. In this particular scene a commander is reproaching a subordinate due to the specific spot that the latter has chosen to plant their flag, that is to say the side of their recently conquered mountain instead of its peak, with the result that the opposite armies, unable to get sight of it, are still attacking and bombing the area. This encourages the reader to question how it is possible that a troop made of soldiers who do not even understand the basic and obvious function of flag planting may have won a battle: by chance, or, one could go as far as insinuating, by mistake?

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is possible to distinguish a section of cartoons that is specifically dedicated to them, in which not only do these vehicles serve the purpose of shedding light on soldiers' immaturity but they also become protagonists themselves. These illustrations reveal that vehicles become domestic devices and even anthropomorphic in the eyes of low rank soldiers, in particular tanks and other armoured vehicles emerge as the ones that inspire soldiers to seek some sort of human relationship with them despite their obvious lack of empathy. To begin with, tanks are turned into wood stoves (January 11 1981) or as snowmen that on some occasion may scare some suspicious colleagues (January 9 1983); in the second place, some young men in uniform treat them like animals, for instance as elephants to whom they throw peanuts through the barrel as if it were their trunk (November 7 1982), or as horses that they pinch with the risk of provoking their wrath (January 4 1981); moreover, they are considered as humans, to the extent that celebrations for their circumcision are organised (September 26 1982); but, to conclude, it is possible to detect with a certain irony that these vehicles ultimately emerge as smarter than soldiers themselves, than those soldiers who should normally drive them, as it is testified by the representation of a tank that crawls down on the ground in the trench to avoid being seen by its adversary, that is embodied by another tank that is approaching from afar (November 28 1982). To some extent, it could be argued that the humanisation of tanks serves the purpose of emphasising the inhuman behaviour of high rank officers toward their subordinates, to the degree that the latter are more easily prompted to seek a familiar presence in the pieces of metal that compose their vehicles than in their commanders made of skin and bones (and, who knows, a heart?); however, it is undeniable that the specific uses that young soldiers make of these vehicles inscribe these cartoons in the same set of illustrations that in the end question the intelligence of these men at the very basis.

And, to conclude, even though young men in uniform have so far emerged in these cartoons as, to begin with, fearful, in the second place, lazy, and moreover incapable beyond imagination, the fourth and final major characteristic that is attributed to them is haughtiness. In fact, a set of caricatures depicts low rank soldiers as acquiring an increasingly arrogant and presumptuous attitude once they are back in the barracks, which is indeed a surprising and above all contradictory behaviour given its clear contrast to the three other major portraits that have emerged so far.

This last cartoon trend encourages a reflection on the reasons that might have led the author to elaborate particularly on this version of the soldiers' personality, that hints that these men feel fortified by their direct experience of war even though, as we know, their reaction to the battlefield has proved merely a theatre of ridicule for them, where they have staged unmistakably bad performances. What the author seems to unveil here is the beginning of a process of excessive smugness and ego building rooted in frustration and low self-confidence on the part of these young men that, in origin and mechanism, appears similar to that which their superiors also exemplify, as it was highlighted in the section above dedicated to them.

Ironically, not only is the building process similar but also the effect of this immoderate ego, that is a general image of ridicule. For, what clearly emerges in the fictional situations that fall under this trend is that the soldiers definitely cannot afford a smug and arrogant attitude, especially in the light of the fact that at the moment of fighting for "real", in a context of war rather than during training, they prove a total disaster, as the most recently examined illustrations have shown.

Haughtiness emerges and becomes a source of ridicule especially under two circumstances, namely whenever low rank soldiers act aggressively against a person (or even an inanimate object, as we will see shortly) who clearly represents no threat to them, and when they overrate their own shrewdness compared to that of their enemies and colleagues.

An example of the first case is an illustration dated November 20 1983 (Fig. 91), which portrays three young soldiers in the act of surrounding and threatening a potato with weapons, namely a gun and two knives, while for obvious reasons the "hostage" stands still in the middle of the group without posing any danger whatsoever. A commander then approaches and asks the three men whether it is the first time in their life that they face the task of peeling a potato, revealing what the whole situation is about.

The second case may be well exemplified by a strip that was published on September 25 1983 (Fig. 92) in which while walking in the wide territory controlled by his squad a soldier hears a colleague shouting at him from the top of a faraway hill: "don't move [or] I'll

hit you!"[20] Underestimating the "threat" for coming from a fellow guard and convinced of the impossibility to accomplish such a task anyway given the vast distance that divides the two of them, the walking soldier takes the order as a joke and replies mockingly: "you'll hit my *ss[21] from there..." However, a few seconds later (that is, in the following scene) something hits him right on the bottom, meaning that the sniper has literally accomplished the challenge that he had just posed, and now makes him shout in pain. Although this is not overtly stated, it appears evident that the sole reason for the sniper to shoot was to prove to our protagonist his own ability as a good shot, whereas had the latter replied in a way that proved a sincere trust in the skills of his colleague he would have presumably avoided such punishment.

In both situations depicted here the arrogance of low rank soldiers is meaningless and valueless, since it is not being shown during a critical moment of warfare that might actually demand it; hence it becomes ridiculous. Ultimately, it confirms once more the soldiers' lack of common sense and of a realistic perception of military dynamics, as much as of themselves.

The low rank soldiers' cartoons that were discussed here constitute a representative overview aimed at providing the reader with evidence of the variety of portraits and narrative paths that *Gırgır* developed as far as the representation of the military in uniform is concerned. It goes without saying that these caricatures (not only the ones that were selected for the argument) potentially pave the way for analyses framed also by other foci, namely expressions of masculinity, human rights, criticisms of exploitation, political discourses on danger and war as daily practices,[22] generation clashes[23] and educational roles,[24] just to

[20] The details that reveal that he finds himself in a land controlled by his army rather than in a hostile territory are his relaxed gait, the fact that he carries no weapon, and, ultimately, the answer that he provides to his interlocutor.

[21] This is expressed by the speaking character in Turkish as "döt", a mangling of the word "göt" that actually expresses the same meaning with the same informal and vulgar connotations as "ass". Self-censorship in the decision to avoid the explicit vulgar word in this case should not be attributed to the regime; instead, it is a consequences of the no-swearword rule that was in force in *Gırgır* and that mirrored Aral's will not to be offensive nor to turn the magazine into a negative example to the (young) readership. Hence, the author's decision to avoid mentioning the full word is reproduced also in the translation that appears here above in the main text.

[22] While masculinity, human rights and exploitation of young soldiers emerge from the strip as self-evident aspects, let use mention an example of a cartoon that could encourage a reflection on the daily practice of danger and war. A caricature dating October 23 1983 (Fig. 93) presents a military chef enraged at a pilot for dropping a missile which has landed exactly in the cauldron in which he was preparing food for the troops; astonishingly, the man's rage derives not from the attempt on his life but from the soup scattered all over the floor that now forces him to start cooking a brand new meal.

[23] Interestingly this aspect emerges despite the absence of characters linked by parent-child ties. In a cartoon published on January 23 1983 (Fig. 94) a very young soldier has just modified a tank, adding two legs and a few pretty decorations to its sides, and reveals that he has made these changes so that if *its* father – the father of the tank! – arrives he (it) will not be able to recognise its son. The boy is clearly projecting on the inanimate vehicle

mention the most evident ones. Nevertheless, these potentially fruitful and articulated readings were intentionally left unacknowledged throughout the analysis with the purpose of allowing room to a higher number of examples, and thus of giving a clearer idea of the variety of military portraits that the *Biraz da savaşalım* was bravely putting forward under the regime.[25] This was deemed more relevant to the general discourse of this work than showing the reader the several directions that the analysis of a single illustration could take; an aspect that the author hopes to have sufficiently covered through the examination of the cartoons that were discussed in the previous chapters.

The nuances in the soldiers' characters and emotions that appear from these portraits are so numerous and variegated, at the same time they all converge on such a discrediting representation of the men in uniform that they raise strong doubts about the claims of their author regarding their meaning. Actually, although more than three decades later Pek asserts that with the *Biraz da savaşalım* he was not attacking the soldiers themselves but the very same concept of the military system, the image that emerges from his strip is not a victimised one in which the young characters appear at the mercy of a mechanism of recruitment that overwhelms them; on the contrary, the protagonists in uniform often appear to be perfectly fitting the arrogant and aggressive profile of the higher ranks, as well as the general idea of a military system that is overbearing by definition.

Besides, when this is not the case, the image that emerges instead is that of young men incapable of carrying out their military duty not exactly due to their young age but to "mental gaps" whose often astonishing depth suggests that it is unlikely that they will overcome them with age. The difference between the author's declared aim and the portrait that emerges from the analysis is to some extent overwhelming; to reduce it, it might be useful to rely on the third and last category of soldiers cartoons, namely the one that targets all men in uniform together, more precisely all ranks without distinction.

As a matter of fact the third and last broad category of *Biraz da savaşalım* cartoons distinguishes itself for occasionally putting forward scenes, hence a type of criticism, that were not detected in the two previous ones. Let us mention in this respect a caricature that

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the sense of forbidden and related subterfuges that he himself adopts in order to hide from his parents those actions that he knows they would not approve.

[24] An illustration dating September 25 1983 (Fig. 95) displays a jet pilot who shows great concern about the good manners of a man on land whom he is attacking from the air: sarcastically, while dropping missiles over him he also reproaches his victim by shouting: "hey, don't curse!".

[25] This statement is valid for all the cartoons that are object of this chapter, thus for the portrayals of soldiers of high, low and mixed ranks alike.

appeared in the strip on October 23, 1983 (Fig. 96) and that sees as protagonists two officers who are activating a neutron bomb from afar; whether they are just testing it in an isolated area or detonating it in a populated place is not clear, nor it is relevant for the satirical accomplishment of the sketch. The scene captures the exact moment in which, in the foreground, one of the two officers pushes the button that activates the bomb while, on the background, the effect of his action causes a powerful explosion that sends a huge cloud of smoke into the sky. The second officer, who was supposedly standing beside his colleague until the explosion, has now abandoned him and is running away scared.

The reaction of the latter inspires an interesting and unexpected comment in the former, who, instead of, say, blaming him for his cowardly behaviour or, by contrast, reassuring him that the large distance that exists between them and the bomb is a guarantee of their own safety, chooses to persuade him to stay in his place by explaining: "don't be frightened buddy, nothing [will] happen to us. This neutron bomb is only harmful to people..."

Even though so far the analysis of the *Biraz da savaşalım* has often suggested a general attack on soldiers' basic intelligence, here it frankly appears exaggerated to interpret these words along the same line. In this case such interpretation would imply that the speaker lacks intelligence to the extent that he is unable to recognise the logical connection between the general "people" that he mentions and himself, in other words the fact that a weapon that is harmful for "people" constitutes a danger for him too (in which case his colleague would be right in perceiving a risk and running away).

Assuming that this interpretation would incorrectly discredit the character's intellectual faculties beyond any conceivable extent – (it would be simply too much!) – let us focus on the only other meaning that his words possibly suggest. That is to say, the speaking soldier perceives himself and his colleague as "inhuman". According to him this condition nullifies all reason to worry for themselves, as it determines the fundamental difference between the two of them and the targets of the bomb, who are the only "people".

Absurd as it might initially appear, this interpretation encourages us to question what it is according to him that eventually makes them different from other people and exempt from becoming victims of the explosion, especially given that his mention of "the people" (in general, since he does not make allusion to a distinct group like, for example, the people of the nearby towns) hints at humans in the broadest sense of the word. For a correct answer to this question a note on the expression chosen in the original becomes necessary. The word *insan* means "person" as much as "human being"; furthermore, the same term in Turkish is

used to refer also to “the human race”. In the light of the multiple nuances that the meaning of the original word may have and that to some extent are lost in translation since the English language allows to differentiate them through specific expressions, the remark acquires a new, logical sense that shifts it closer to the definition of “human being” and “human race” than of simply “people”. Namely, the soldier is suggesting that his colleague and himself are inhuman.

In the light of the action of which the two are protagonists the readership has one hint at their disposal to interpret this statement, that is the fact that the two have just activated a weapon that is conceived to harm specifically (“only”, in the words of the officer) people. From this it may be derived that the comment embeds a self-criticism derived by the military operation that they are carrying on, that turns them into “monsters” deprived of any human connotation and conscience. In the end, what at first glance could appear as an absurd scene that lacks sense and rationality unveils itself as a strong accusation against military activities.

Accusations that cross the boundaries of the relationship between high and low rank soldiers and of the criticism of specific behaviours of single officers are not limited to that. On the contrary, some illustrations that involve all ranks of the military as protagonists dare to push their criticism even further by expanding their lens beyond the military world, to the political system in the name of which armies act.

This is the case of a sketch of November 14 1982 (Fig. 97), that presents a military jet flying over a village, along with a man floating in the air right above the aircraft. Being by now extensively familiar with the most common symbolic and stereotyped human representations that abound in *Gırgır*, it appears immediately evident from the elegant suit, bow tie and cigar that the “flying man”, so to speak, is a businessman, who is portrayed as particularly at ease in this illustration (with the hands joined behind his back) despite the surreal and potentially dangerous situation in which he finds himself. In fact, besides showing no hint of fear whatsoever he is even returning the mean glance that the jet pilot is addressing to him.

The reason for such ease and complicity between the two is disclosed by the pilot who, thinking aloud, reveals: “he… he… this too does the trick of the neutron bomb... he doesn’t harm objects but wipes out people...” From this comment it is understood that the businessman is anything but a victim, instead he is a tool adopted by the army as a weapon to harm civilians.

The criticism that emerges from this scene is two-fold. On the one hand, it addresses the use of weapons devised to harm undefended civilians, which creates an enormous disparity between the army that launches the offensive and the country that is under attack, for paying the price in the case of the latter is not the local troops but the population. On the other hand, criticism is expressed against the exaggerated freedom of action and opportunities that the neoliberal financial system grants to businessmen, who are allowed limitless opportunity of pursuing their own benefits to the detriment of their employees, on the one hand, and investors, on the other.

Ultimately, the political condemnation of this subtle cartoon is even broader than that of the preceding illustration, since not only does it abandon the borders of barracks and battlefields to make a broader and stronger accusation against the inhuman nature of war, but it also connects the military world with the political sphere, establishing a direct link between the two and criticising them as accomplices within the same single corrupt system.

Doubtlessly, the two illustrations that were just discussed are striking for the level to which they elevate the political criticism of the *Biraz da savaşalım* compared to all the others that were previously examined; accordingly, they were deemed worthy of reporting in the analysis. Nonetheless, as anticipated while introducing them it is necessary to reiterate that such powerful denounces are occasional encounters in the "all rank soldiers cartoons", rather than the norm.

Exceptions to this model aside, the illustrations of the third category reproduce approximately the same military portraits that characterise the previous two, in a way that seems to confirm to a great extent the reading that has emerged from our analysis instead of the one asserted by Pek.

Once more, with this category the reader is confronted with men in uniform who take themselves too seriously. Even though some war moments put officers of different ranks face to face with each other, the tense confrontation that could derive from such proximity and the solemnity of the hierarchical scale that could possibly be emphasised do not prevent young soldiers as much as commanders from showing, sometimes literally exhibiting, the high esteem that they have for themselves.

Despite the easiness with which members of each rank could in theory discredit their immediate and further subordinates, as was the case in some cartoons of the first category that were discussed earlier on in the chapter, once soldiers are all together no humiliation takes

place.[26] On the contrary, they all converge on a sense of solemnity that they seem to attribute to their own role and mission. In itself, such seriousness could be a positive sign of maturity that would come quite astonishingly given the critical military representation that constitutes the *fil rouge* of the *Biraz da savaşalım*; in fact, unsurprisingly, the truth is that the contexts in which discipline and solemnity emerge reverse their meaning and value completely.

Dedicated to this grave seriousness is a cartoon dated January 4 1981 (Fig. 98) that at first glance could be described as portraying the return of troops across the border from a military operation in which they have been victorious. The squad is parading in a line led by a general, followed by some members who march at his pace, a musician of the army band who beats time with a drum, two other members who hold a hostage and, at the end of the line, a soldier who points a rifle at the hostage to prevent his escape. The whole scene appears quite solemn and the sound of the drum (visually expressed through the words "tam... tam tara tam tam... tam.. tara tam… tam" written in capital letters above the group) emphasises this seriousness.

Pity, then, that the hostage in question is not an enemy soldier but an animal, precisely a turkey, that they might have randomly found in the fields during a training exercise, easily captured given their weapons that are obviously better than those of a hunting team, and that they are now taking to the spot where it will be killed, as the comment of the cook of the troop, almost out of the picture, reveals.[27] In brief, these characters are overestimating themselves and the importance of their actions, to the extent that the ordinary act of hunting and capturing an animal for feeding the squad is welcomed as a glorious event.

The "fake hostage" of this illustration and the importance that is attributed to it leads us to wonder whether the moment is approached so seriously because these soldiers are not able to capture actual enemies – a doubt that evokes the scenes of young soldiers having a hard time managing hostages that have already been discussed. Though this might not necessarily be the exact focus of the caricature that was just discussed, it is definitely the case of another similar illustration dedicated to soldiers without rank distinction.

Reference is made here to a cartoon that appeared in the magazine on September 4 1983 (Fig. 99) and that portrays three soldiers on the point of opening fire against a hostage.

[26] The second category of cartoons revealed that mocking and criticism in the opposite direction are also not rare, that is to say from bottom to top of the military scale; yet these cannot be perpetuated in collective moments where all ranks are gathered together for the obvious fact that military discipline does not allow affronts to the superiors to become manifest. In fact, it is usually the clumsiness of young soldiers that moves criticism and mocking of the higher ranks away from the secret dimension where they are supposed to remain, as in the case of the sketch in which the moment of fun based on the imitation of the commander fails because the two jokers have stolen the actual helmet of their superior for real.

[27] "They are going to kill the turkey", he claims.

The latter is standing against an execution wall awaiting death and the presence of said wall along with the one of two further allied soldiers standing a step backward to observe the execution suggest that the scene is taking place in their barracks or military camp, anyway in a territory controlled by them.

This condition puts the executioners in a position of undisputed advantage compared to the victim, whose chances to be rescued by some external agent are essentially zero. Still, the soldiers feel the need to manifest their unfriendly, aggressive and offensive attitude to an extent that becomes excessive given the favourable context in which they act: their threatening glance appears unnecessary, hence gratuitous, like the extremely close distance at which they point the rifles at the eyes of the victim. In addition, three executioners for a single victim appear excessive too and confirms the high aggression with which the scene is loaded.

So, why so much emphasis on a single execution? Is the hostage an important military target? Not at all. On the contrary, the hostage awaiting death is not even an enemy but, surprisingly, a chicken. A comment by one of the two soldiers who are observing the scene reveals that he expects to find chicken for dinner as a result, revealing that the whole execution simply concerns the preparation of the next meal.

The disclosure of the meaning of the execution does not yet explain the exaggerated setting of the scene and attitude of its protagonists. Regarding this point, the only plausible explanation seems to be that since these soldiers are usually unable to keep hostages in their hands (we have already seen that they let them escape even in the most unlikely situations and conditions), once that they have one under control they all long to take part in his execution and concentrate on him all the attention and "commitment", as a matter of fact all the frustration and cruelty that they are normally expected to spread among the numerous enemies that in theory they should capture, but that due to their ineptitude they actually do not. To sum up, briefly, unable to deal with actual prisoners and hostages, these incompetent and cowardly soldiers opt for venting their frustration on victims that constitute no risk at all to the success of their mission.

The fact that soldiers of all ranks share the same pompous attitude toward themselves and the same self-celebrating behaviour that betrays difficulties in capturing war hostages and dealing with them should not lead to the assumption that their common insecurity and pitfalls become a binding agent that creates a sense of community and shared values among them. Attacks toward subordinates as well as mockery that follow the opposite trajectory in the hierarchical scale were already encountered in the analysis dedicated to high and low rank

soldiers respectively, and recalled here above; what emerges from the illustrations dedicated to all of them together, then, is that the frustrations and misfortunes derived by this "vertical aggression" exist also among members of equal rank, and often for the most trivial reasons. In addition, this is true not only during the daily life in the barracks but even in crucial moments of warfare.

The first case may be exemplified by the caricature of a soldier who has opened fire against the cook of his squad, injuring his arm, for having served him a meal that was not of his liking (January 9, 1983, Fig. 100). The second case, then, is represented on September 12 1982 by the portrayal of a soldier who becomes irritated at the pilot of his troop for throwing from the aircraft food supplies for his companions who are fighting on the ground, among whom the angry one, in a way that causes in the best case a scattering of the food and in the worst case the unintentional transformation of said food into a dangerous weapon capable of hitting the soldiers and hampering their fighting performance (Fig. 101).

In the second example it is evident that the pilot has no intention to cause such harm and that for obvious reasons his control on the direction of the food in the air is significantly limited. It is also true that the soldiers who are supposed to receive it could avoid being hit by simply being more careful in following its trajectory with their eyes. Yet, as the scene reveals, the soldier on land does not hesitate to blame the pilot railing against him in a way that first of all does not lead to a resolution of the problem, and then is a waste of time, energy and concentration that he should save for the ongoing conflict.

In sum, these caricatures reveal that instead of sympathising and helping each other in the harsh situations that military life demands, soldiers do not hesitate to worsen their conditions and the ones of their colleagues, giving proof that they are not able to fulfil their duty with the professionality and common sense that military life demands.

These and other themes equate the illustrations of the third group with the previous ones, which, it should not be forgotten, all belong to the same global representation of the army that the *Biraz da savaşalım* meant to put forward, even though for the sake of the analysis they were divided into three categories. Accordingly, it is here deemed appropriate to avoid repetitions of thematic patterns that have already come to light, thus we will simply remark on the existence of such strong similarities and stress that generally speaking the aspects of soldiers' character, manias and pitfalls that were detected in the two previous sections emerge in a similar way in the case of the protagonists who animate the illustrations of the third category.

Therefore, let us conclude the analysis with a cartoon that though inscribed in the same vision and portrait of all rank soldiers as the previous ones presents a slightly different perspective. That is to say, while not elevating the criticism to the abstract ideological level of the two illustrations that inaugurated this series, it still introduces a new element that the reader has not yet come across. That element is the representation of the position that the army holds in the eyes of the people who do not belong to their world, to put it simply the image of soldiers within civil society.

On January 18 1981, the *Biraz da savaşalım* portrays for the first time a soldier in a setting that is neither the barracks nor a battlefield, rather the domestic milieu of his family (Fig. 102). The warm and cosy environment of a home, with a coffee table decked out with an attractive table cloth upon which a vase of flowers stands, contrasts with the look of the soldier, who is wearing his military uniform and holds a rifle in his hand as if there were an imminent threat waiting for him just outside the door. The reason for such dramatic outfit is soon disclosed by the man himself, who announces that "war has erupted again, I go to the front..." to a female relative who could be either his mother or wife.

The woman appears disappointed by the news, as the movement of her hands reveals (one cocked at her side, that betrays an irritated or at least challenging attitude, the other gesticulating in the air while she addresses him), but only slightly; in fact, her face looks resigned, annoyed, rather than worried or scared for the danger that the man's departure could entail – first and foremost for him, then potentially also for herself (in case the territory of the war is actually their own region). Her concern seems to be rooted not in fear of the war, instead in the fact that the man is leaving home all of a sudden, without previous notice, as if in so doing he were interrupting a dinner or tea break. In fact, all that she has to comment in response is: "buy two lemons on your way back!"

To the reader who is not familiar with Turkish cuisine it should be explained that lemon is an extremely common ingredient in Turkish cooking, accompanying vegetable and fish dishes from soups to elaborate recipes; its presence in so many recipes makes it an element that any family cook would ask a family member to buy from the grocer on their way home, along with bread. The specificity of the woman's request in the illustration is crucial as it not only reveals that she has no concern whatsoever for the fate of her relative in uniform, but also that she deems his mission the most ordinary of tasks, as if he were about to go to work in an office. Here the value of the uniform is totally discredited, the woman's words reveal that bravery and heroism are not features that people recognise as belonging to the army, not even if the people in question are linked to soldiers by family ties, thus who should,

supposedly, support and praise their sons, husbands, fathers and brothers in uniform more than anyone else.

Caricatures of this kind are too rare in *Gırgır* to claim that they constitute a precise trend within the *Biraz da savaşalım*. Despite that, their originality in portraying soldiers outside the military context is undeniable, as much as their incisiveness in declaring that once the members of the army are face to face with the ordinary world of civilians their pomposity loses any meaning, and their self-attached importance collapses.

Besides the singularity and strength of the message that they promote, another feature makes the cartoons on this model worth mentioning. That is to say that if we leave aside the *Biraz da savaşalım* strip for a moment and enlarge the zoom that until now was pointed exclusively at it to the broad graphic production of the magazine it is possible to detect the presence of illustrations other than the ones realised by Pek that promote a similar vision.

As a matter of fact the quantity of these caricatures remains quite limited also within the overall *Gırgır* production (with one exception that will be discussed shortly), nevertheless it is striking that their narrative undermines the image of the military in a quite revealing way. Moreover, it is also remarkable that along with professional cartoonists also amateurs and semi-amateurs took on this type of illustration.

The back cover of the June 28 1981 issue hosts the most representative example of this trend (Fig. 103). As we have already come across in the illustration dedicated to the lost soldier in search of his troops, this scene takes place in a urban context that, actually, is extremely similar to the other one in terms of setting and skyline: here, too, the scene develops in a wide space that could be either a square or a large boulevard, while a skyline of buildings of various heights and a car in transit compose the background; in addition, a similar quiet atmosphere suggests that also in this case no war is being fought in the immediate vicinity.[28]

[28] The resemblances encourage a general comparison of the two that draws the attention, among other details, to their dates of publication. This semi-amateur illustration was presented to the readership only one week after the one of the lost soldier, indeed a striking coincidence in the light of the significant amount of soldiers' cartoons by Pek that found room in the magazine in that period. However, temporal considerations lead us to believe that no direct relation exists between the two insofar as for the amateur cartoon to be published on June 28 1981 its original must have been submitted to the headquarters of the magazine at least by the previous week, a procedure that almost certainly must have left no time to its author to see Pek's illustration (in the copy of the issue of June 21 1981 that he might have bought) and to adopt it as source of inspiration for his own one. In the absence of a direct contact between Pek's cartoon and this semi-amateur artist, the most plausible explanation for the striking similarities of these two illustrations is that being Pek a young cartoonist himself presumably from time to time was benefitting from teaching and advice by Aral and by other experts who worked around him at the headquarters of *Gırgır*, namely the same authors who would hold correspondence with emerging cartoonists

A major difference, however, is that the military presence is definitely more assertive here since the protagonist in uniform is not simply wandering around with a lost, desperate attitude. Quite the opposite, he has fiercely taken the street on a tank that massively dominates the scene. This is a fundamental difference as the political satirical message of the illustration revolves precisely around this vehicle.

The tank raises a concern in the observer, which is that a military vehicle presiding over an area where nothing suggests the presence of an armed conflict appears highly unjustified and leaves no option but to interpret its presence as meant to intimidate civilians and establish an aggressive unbalanced power relation between the army and the population. It is no coincidence that the scene actually includes two representatives of civil society, namely two children.

Yet, their reaction to the tank could not be further from the expectations introduced above. In fact, the boys are anything but scared, to the extent that not only do they move around the vehicle with ease, and they are not afraid of touching it, but they have even dared to use it as a swing. The soldier is clearly upset by their presence, which prevents him from moving forward with the vehicle, so he reproaches them: "couldn't you find another place to hang your swing?"; nevertheless, his words are met with a defiant look that suggests their game will last as long as they want. In brief, the soldier has no authority whatsoever.

It may be claimed that to some extent this illustration drags *Gırgır* readers away from the barracks and battlefield to which they got used to with the *Biraz da savaşalım*, towards a more familiar setting that actually mirrors the urban context that they were experiencing in real life. In that case the presence of the soldier and the tank among children, cars and buildings shall be read as inspired by the status of Turkish towns and cities that during the regime were supervised by men in uniform and occupied by military vehicles at every important (strategic) corner.[29]

If this reading is true, the message to be derived is that the permanent presence of the army among civilians determined a loss of prestige of the same, paradoxically indeed. If this

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providing them with stylistic guidance; thus, it might have been the case that similar (and the same) suggestions led to similar (and the same) patterns. The affinity between these two illustrations sheds light once again on the importance of investigating patterns of contamination among cartoonists within and beyond the *Gırgır* office.

[29] Considering the common elements that unite this cartoon with the one of the lost soldier, namely the representation of a man in uniform in a residential area and the date of realisation during the regime, it could be objected to such a late introduction of the "realistic interpretation", that appears only now, only for this illustration. However, let us be reminded that in the other caricature the protagonist's aim was to find the rest of his army and that the expression of his interlocutor revealed that he was looking for them in the wrong place. This means that he was actually "displaced", his presence there was an exceptional circumstance that, thus, needs to be read as holding no connection with the military control to which Turkey's streets were subject for real during the triennium.

is not the case, thus even if the intention of the author is not to reproduce a fragment of reality, it remains true that the focal message of the scene is that the military command no respect at all, having lost authority even in the eyes of children.

Illustrations of this kind are evidently tied to Pek's strip by an invisible link that makes them all the more precious for our argument. True, it is impossible to establish to what extent and how exactly cartoonists other than him were inspired by his work, in particular the amateur and semi-amateur ones. For instance, in the case of the illustration that was just discussed it could be either the case that the author drew inspiration precisely from the concept of the military's lack of prestige in the eyes of civil society that emerges in scenes like the one in which the officer is asked to buy lemons on his way back from the war, or, more simply, that he was generally inspired by the *Biraz da savaşalım* broadly speaking and only by coincidence is the point that he makes similar to the one elaborated by Pek in the "lemons cartoon". No univocal answer may assert the extent and form of contamination and certainly in each soldier cartoon that does not hold Pek's signature the truth shifts along these two possibilities.

What is true, nonetheless, is that such challenging portraits of the army made by the pen of non-professional cartoonists unmistakably drew from the *Biraz da savaşalım* and reveal a transfer of, if not its values (it is here taken for granted that the disapproval of military activity lies at the basis of the political thought of these illustrators independent of Pek), certainly ideas to express them and the courage to do so publicly.

To conclude, what should be praised about the soldier cartoons realized by amateurs and semi-amateurs is, first, the bravery of their authors (like their counterparts who made the violence cartoons that were discussed in the previous chapter, insofar as in both cases publication largely exposed them to persecution), furthermore, their dialogue with the *Biraz da savaşalım*, and finally, their revealing that in this case too *Gırgır* proved to be a platform of freedom of opinion and political diversity compared to the official line.

General considerations on the "soldier cartoons" and conclusions to the chapter

The analysis has unveiled an heterogeneous corpus of soldier cartoons that are devoted to different moments of military life in the barracks and on the battlefield, ranging from (not)

learning to drive military vehicles to coping with power relations and peculiar superior officers, from unsuccessfully training with weapons to the moment of fighting the enemy face to face. On different occasions the protagonists emerge as groundlessly aggressive, without honour, or having an extreme egos, but also as frightened, childlike and even stupid.

Considering the *Biraz da savaşalım* in its large time frame, that is to say beyond the message enclosed in single illustrations one by one, instead as a long-lasting regular appointment that treated the subject of soldiers' inadequacy for the military experience under a different light, it is possible to claim that globally the strip provided the basis for the normalisation of soldiers' imperfection. The constant display of failures and mistakes, to which no exception is granted (it never occurs that these portraits are replaced by a positive representation of the protagonists), normalises them. However, this process should not be understood as implying support or justification for the protagonists' behaviour, by contrast as emphasising the gap between objectives and results and the reversed order of things, in which improvement during training and success at war constitute an unimaginable exception rather than the norm.

In this upside down military world the feature that dominates the narration is the surreal. Although the author declares that for him the absurd was only one among the strategies that he adopted for the strip,[30] its contribution to the accomplishment of the success of the cartoons from a satirical point of view clearly emerges as dominant over, say, linguistic choices or aesthetic devices. After all, paradoxical characters, absurd situations and improbable dialogues are the ingredients that most highlight soldiers' incompetence and pitfalls.

The heavy presence of surreal elements inevitably recalls the deep message of the *Biraz da savaşalım* that was extensively discussed in the first part of this chapter, accordingly it should be interpreted as a narratological transposition of the concept of absurdity of the military system that lies at the core of the strip. In other words, to give life to senseless characters and situations in order to stress the meaninglessness of the (military) structure to which they belong.

As we already know, this message inspired Pek's soldiers strip from its origins until the end, so, as the author underlines more than once,[31] it was valid before, during, after the regime and irrespective of it. Pek insists on this point as a disclaimer, to make clear that more

[30] Behiç Pek, in a private interview with the author (July 14 2014).
[31] Behiç Pek, in a private interview with the author (July 14 2014).

than thirty years later he is neither trying to promote his cartoons as something different from what they actually were for him at that time, namely a critical representation of the military world in general, nor to claim the merit for a goal that he was not pursuing back then, that is the one of hitting the military junta in particular.

However, this claim inevitably re-opens the debate concerning the gap between the message that the strip carried in the intentions of its author and the added meanings that it came to express in the light of the military coup. Whereas the former was extensively discussed before delving into the analysis of the cartoon sample, having now acquired familiarity with the types of military portraits that emerge from the strip it is time for a reflection on the latter.

Generally speaking the military portrayal that emerges from the strip is, in one word, disastrous. In the light of the illustrations that were examined above it is possible to claim that this was done in a way that largely avoided the critique of the military recruitment system and of other structures related to the armed forces since, as it was already noticed during the analysis, these features do not always suffice to justify the unusual and erroneous attitudes that the characters present in the cartoons. For example, while the young age of soldiers may explain traits like their childish attitude and fear, it does not explain their difficulties controlling hostages, their laziness and their arrogance, to mention just a few.

In addition, let us stress that the targets of these sacrilegious representations are not only young men on their mandatory military leave but also officers of higher ranks, most often commanders and captains, in other words characters who have freely chosen a military career and of a greater age compared to the novices. These two details raise expectations of fair and successful behaviour, that are then deeply betrayed by these fictional army leaders who emerge as anything but an example for their subordinates.

Furthermore, when superiors and subordinates appear all together the result is an apotheosis of presumption that becomes ridiculous. Such aspects can be rooted in the meaninglessness of the military system and of war only partially, they might be justified in this rhetorical framework only to a small extent. As a consequence, even though this message might have certainly been the *fil rouge* that inspired the production of the *Biraz da savaşalım* in the intentions of the author, it fails to satisfy the reader as its main explanation.

From the reader's perspective, the portraits that result from the strip inevitably appear as going beyond the message of the author and hitting the single soldiers as men in uniform besides the military system that dictates the rules of their job and life. Doubtlessly this difference might be said to be valid throughout the whole existence of the *Biraz da savaşalım*,

nevertheless it is during the military triennium that criticism of the protagonists acquires a deeper meaning. That is to say, in the context of the regime and vis-à-vis this strip, the generally valid tendency to identify fictional characters with real people that the reader is familiar with hints at the military figures who dominate the political scene and the news; deliberately or not the men in uniform of the illustrations become for the observer a cross-reference to the junta.

Therefore, although these caricatures were not a reaction to the coup nor an attack on its actors, this mental process ensured that their publication during the military rule carried a challenge to them too. In terms of criticism, this challenge may be deemed comparable to the one determined by political cartoons in the most traditional meaning of the term: just as the latter display the lack of virtues and moral values of politicians, the soldier cartoons shed light on equivalent (lack of) qualities in the case of the politically self-appointed men in uniform.

A possible objection to this claim could be that no scientific data exists to prove that the readers were actually identifying the protagonists of the strip with the five generals. Still, the *Biraz da savaşalım* should be considered in its larger frame, that is, of a satirical magazine that, first, was political in its messages and broadly speaking leftist in its analysis, and, second, was directed and realised by authors who had artistically grown in the *elli kuşağı*, thus who had been the pioneers of anti-militarism and democracy (among other political and ethical values) in the graphic arts. These features were certainly not the only ingredients of the success of *Gırgır* and cannot be given credit for its popularity without acknowledging also its other peculiarities of various nature, like the simple language, affordable price and the other factors that were introduced in previous chapters; yet, these two become more relevant than the others in this discourse in the light of a third element, that is the rise in popularity that the magazine experienced during the regime.

Far from being a coincidence, the astonishing sales growth is evidence of political affinity vis-à-vis the military rule between the magazine and its newly attracted followers, who presumably came to appreciate its satire exactly for the anti-regime stance that it expressed.[32] This politically conscious readership was evidently able (and keen) to read between the lines the references that in multiple ways the numerous satirical contributions of *Gırgır* were making to the military rule. So, it is fair to assume that in the same way as they could appreciate the sarcastic portraits of the political entourage of the junta and the tough

[32] It is true that the peak of sales was recorded when the magazine was resumed after the four week ban, in any case let us not forget that its sales rate had been experiencing a steady increase since the first days of military rule.

representations of repression, they could also perceive in the soldier cartoons an attack on the army in power.

The meaning that the *Biraz da savaşalım* gained beyond the intentions and messages of its author in the political context of the military triennium may be fully understood in conjunction with what a few pages above was briefly referred to as the only exception to the low presence of soldier cartoons in the magazine besides Pek's strip. Reference is made here to the comic strip *Hasbi Tembeler*, the Turkish translation of *Beetle Bailey*, which *Gırgır* had been adopting since 1973.

Beetle Bailey is the famous American cartoon created by Mort Walker and published in the International Herald Tribune since 1950, which is still being produced today with the assistance of his sons and other collaborators. Inspired by its author's experience in the army, it narrates life in a military training camp. Its main characters are the young protagonist soldier who gives the name to the strip (both in the original and in its Turkish version),[33] a sergeant, a commander, two female secretaries and some other officers, all of whom interact with the young Hasbi during his experience at the camp.

In the context of *Gırgır*, *Hasbi Tembeler* may be defined as the elder overseas brother of the *Biraz da savaşalım*, as a clear "kinship" exists between the two not only for the focus on barracks life but also for the major message that they intend to convey. It is true that the two are independent from each other and shall doubtlessly be considered as distinct since they present clear differences in their narrative choices and paths – the most evident one being that Walker always uses the same protagonists who maintain their names and peculiar personality in every episode, while Pek always presents different and anonymous characters to the readership. Nevertheless, their affinity is evident, especially insofar as both strips denounce the absurdity of the army, with its rules and hierarchies.

In addition, the most prominent features of the soldiers who animate Wolker's strip are widespread laziness, general inability and their being anything but brilliant. In brief, they are

[33] In the Turkish version the title of the strip (at the same time name of its protagonist) acquires a connotation that the original does not present; in fact, while in English "Beetle" is intended to be the nickname of the protagonist and "Bailey", which carries no specific meaning, his surname, the translation results in a description that announces his identity and characteristics, as "Hasbi" means "volunteer" and the surname "Tembeler" is a union of the adjective "tembel" with the noun "er", which compose "lazy soldier". It is interesting that neither in English nor in Turkish is the protagonist given a full real name and surname; at the same time, this is not particularly surprising as it conforms to the highly common practice of naming characters of satirical texts and cartoons in ways that to some extent anticipate the aspects of their personality, attitude and actions that create humour.

characteristics that echo the qualities, or rather lack of them, which have recurred throughout this chapter with regard to the men of the *Biraz da savaşalım*.

Hasbi Tembeler is mentioned at such a late stage of this chapter for the simple reason that it is an imported product that was not created in military-ruled Turkey. Its origins, identity and distribution circumstances make it relevant to the assessment of the representations of the army during the regime only to a limited extent, because, first, it was not being created within the country or by a national cartoonist abroad, so it was neither part of the Turkish tradition nor a result of the national political and cultural context.

Furthermore, even though the universality of its message and the familiarity of its protagonists are undeniable (and have allowed the strip to enjoy success on a global scale since its birth),[34] *Hasbi Tembeler* has a strong American identity: its characters are soldiers of the US Army and are based on real American officers whom the author met during his military leave; the camp where the whole strip is set is based on a real military camp; and the voluptuous blonde secretary is inspired by Marilyn Monroe.

Finally, the transfer from the original version to the translated one in *Gırgır* inevitably created a temporal gap that even in the best case (that is, in case the Turkish magazine proposed the episodes created most recently) made *Hasbi Tembeler* totally and dramatically detached from the facts and events that were troubling Turkey at the moment of each release.

Notwithstanding its foreign origin and identity, by the time of the coup *Hasbi Tembeler* was a well-established presence in *Gırgır* that the readership would acknowledge as the American soldiers strip. Notably, it is exactly in the light of its popularity and at the same time strangeness to Turkish dynamics that, perhaps paradoxically, it is relevant to our discourse. For, in spite of the absence in its episodes of any reference whatsoever to the military junta headed by Evren and independent of the original message intended by Walker, the very same presence of *Hasbi Tembeler* in the pages of a Turkish magazine changed its meaning during the regime: it made it a mockery, an outrage, or at least a reflection on the Turkish army, too.

In this switch of meaning the American strip emerges as intermingled with the *Biraz da savaşalım* a second time, in other words not only for the overall theme and message that their respective authors intend to convey, that were already pointed out as similarities in general, so also before September 12, but also insofar as the political and cultural context in which they were circulated made their political potential evolve in the same way, turning

[34] At present Beetle Bailey is distributed in more than seventy countries worldwide.

them into two graphic weapons against the military in power. This might be slightly less evident in the case of *Hasbi Tembeler* due to the foreign set of references that moulds its protagonists, yet the political statement implied by the presence of these military strips under the military rule is undeniable.

Moreover, let us remark that the two strips were being published on the same page in *Gırgır*, with *Hasbi Tembeler* traditionally retaining its upper right corner and the scenes of *Biraz da savaşalım* being distributed in various different shapes, as it was already explained, but always below their American counterpart.

With regard to this physical closeness it is interesting and to some extent surprising to hear Pek's opinion that this is merely a coincidence. Actually the author explains that the location of the military strips on the same page was unintentional and affirms that the two were always perceived and recognised as distinct satirical appointments.[35] That *Biraz da savaşalım* and *Hasbi Tembeler* were two separate creations, each with its own characters, satirical codes and witticism is in no doubt; on the other hand, it is hard to believe that the two were assigned a corner on the same page almost by chance, even more so in the specific case of a magazine that was entrusted to such a careful editor as Aral, who is remembered by his colleagues as a man that in his work (as a cartoonist, as a teacher to aspiring cartoonists and as an editor) hardly left anything to chance. Considerations of Aral's precision as well as his political stand encourage us to believe that it is more plausible that, on the contrary, placing Pek's strip under *Hasbi Tembeler* from its very first appearance reflected precisely the wish of giving birth to a sort of *asker köşesi*, a military corner, that is to say a space, almost a full page entirely dedicated to the absurdity of the military world.

In order to dispel possible objections, let us clarify that it is true that, as was mentioned, later Pek's strip was moved to the vertical space that had once been the column of Paçacı, however let us recall also that this was only a temporary move dictated by the necessity to replace the latter for the limited period of time during which he would stay out of the country, hence of the magazine too. Conceivably, in that circumstance the choice fell on Pek's strip as the one to be moved to that page because its format presented similarities to Paçacı's one (three to five scenes, either sequential or separate, in any case working from a narrative point of view both horizontally and vertically), and thus made it easily adaptable to its space, hence a suitable substitute.

[35] Behiç Pek, in a private interview with the author (July 14, 2014).

Ultimately, the return of *Biraz da savaşalım* below *Hasbi Tembeler* seems to confirm the wish to present them to the readership together, evidently not as a single creation, yet nonetheless as two distinct cartoons in dialogue with each other. The *fil rouge* is clear: it is the critique of the military system, of military activities and of militarism broadly speaking. Although it is impossible to measure it scientifically, the impact of this dialogue in a phase when the army was ubiquitous in the daily life of the nation and criticism of it is was not tolerated at all may after all be assessed as having a tremendous strength.

The confrontation with *Hasbi Tembeler* encourages a reflection on a crucial aspect of the *Biraz da savaşalım* that was not discussed yet, namely self-censorship. Pek affirms that to some degree his strip was the Turkish version of *Hasbi Tembeler* insofar as the soldiers that he gave life to were the local version of the American ones created by Walker, for they presented features that the Turkish readership would feel closer to.[36] In this respect, it was already noticed that in fact his characters speak a language that is typically Turkish, for instance when they address a commander in a way that is similar to the pronunciation of "teacher" by young students, and find themselves in situations that mirror Turkish habits, like when they are asked to buy lemons on their return from a conflict.

However, it is also true that these soldiers cannot be easily identified as Turks. If *Biraz da savaşalım* were to be translated and published abroad, in no way would the foreign reader find clues to assert the nationality of its protagonists (aside from guessing it in the light of the origins of the author). For example, the uniforms are not a realistic representation of the ones of the Turkish army; likewise, the helmets, though often carefully drawn, present details that do not mirror real ones; in the same way, every time that soldiers conquer a new land they plant in the ground a flag that has a purely symbolic pattern, with no identifiable colours or symbols, and definitely not with a crescent and star.

In addition to these stylistic choices, lack of clarity regarding the country of reference of the strip may be noticed also in its content, precisely in the tailoring of the characters, who never appear in a way that makes allusion to specific real military figures, let alone to the five members of the junta.

The absence of details that are clearly Turkish is not coincidental; on the contrary, it responded to the precise goal of dispelling the risk that censors could recognise the fictional soldiers as representing the national army. If that were the case, the regime would have

[36] Behiç Pek, in a private interview with the author (July 14, 2014).

doubtlessly persecuted the author for insulting the nation, as the ban on the cover caricature of the singer wearing the Turkish flag unmistakably proves. Such a risk existed in Turkey irrespective of the regime (and it does even more so nowadays, since the infamous article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code took effect in 2005, making denigration of the Turkish nation illegal); still, for obvious reasons under the military rule the representation of the army became a more sensitive taboo, thus the risk of being persecuted for it increased.

In addition to the predictable fact that being in power the military themselves were more keen on hampering and punishing attempts to critically and satirically represent the Turkish army than political leaders (while, in ideal conditions of freedom of expression, for the same reason they would have also become a privileged subject in this sense), two further circumstances contributed to raise the risk of persecution for such attempts. One was ideological and consisted in the mission of the junta to promote and strengthen nationalist values and practices, in relation to which the image of a perfect and reliable army held a key role and was not to be brought into question. The other was practical and was determined by the fact that the strict censorship that the junta put in force left little hope for sensitive illustrations and articles to not be scrutinised, in other words to remain unnoticed and unpunished.

In brief, Pek's self-imposed degree of censorship was dictated by the goal of creating characters that the readership would recognise as portraying the Turkish army but that, at the same time, could not be attacked for doing so officially. The reward for keeping the identity of fictional soldiers ambiguous was avoiding the danger of being denounced and tried, an outcome of enormous importance in the delicate political phase of the regime, when trials could easily be held for the most insignificant details, as well as carried on for excessively long spans.

Judging from the survival of *Biraz da savaşalım* in *Gırgır* throughout the whole military era (except for, obviously, the four weeks during which the whole magazine was prevented from being published as a penalty for the censored caricature that was recalled above) and considering its permanence on the market for more than two decades with respect to its entire chronology, in retrospect it is fair to claim that this conscious self-censorship proved a successful strategy. As a matter of fact, the limitations that Pek imposed on his characters and scenes may be rather defined as, simply, a well-measured dose of precaution that, on the one hand, allowed the strip's visibility and continuity, and, on the other, granted it the opportunity to print negative representations of the army all the same, as the analysis in this chapter has shown. Finally, in the evaluation of the benefits of that caution a last crucial

merit needs to be acknowledged, that is that by portraying a wide range of general prototypes of soldiers rather than a single unit, rank or specific military figures (fictional or real alike), in the end the strip results in a critique of the Turkish military institution in its entirety.

Let us conclude by asserting that the attack on the military institution as a whole earns *Biraz da savaşalım* the record of being the first significant attempt to change the perception of the army in Turkish mainstream culture. Indeed, debates on the armed forces and militarism were not a novelty that took shape in the pages of *Gırgır* and even if we circumscribe them to the Turkish case it is correct to affirm that their flourishing predated the birth of the magazine itself. Yet, in the print media these had fuelled above all the pages of niche newspapers and magazines, and whereas issues that involved the army were being addressed in popular media the focus of the debate was easily on policies and geo-political matters that called into question the army only indirectly, chiefly as acting on behalf of governments and decision makers (whether in the interest of the country or not, is another story).

As far as cartoons prior to Pek's strip are concerned, then, representations of men in uniform abounded in the graphic illustrations of the *elli kuşağı*, as it is known; still, these were conceived for a highly politicised and intellectual public rather than for a general readership. In addition, their content was strictly political and entailed an attack on a world order in which war and militarism were only one aspect.

As the analysis has illustrated, Pek's strip made the scene in this context with a totally innovative representation. First of all, it chose to put soldiers themselves at the core of the illustrations, and second, it managed to combine the themes pertinent to the military sphere with the typical cartoon language. The result was a portrayal of the army that was comic, local, and whose narrative and dialogues were extremely easy to understand, three conditions that made the strip appealing and enjoyable to the wide public.

These conditions also made *Biraz da savaşalım* the first national case of satirical representation of the army in the realm of the mainstream: with its vulnerable and far from perfect soldiers, Pek's strip dissented from the idealised image promoted by the classic iconography, shaped on Atatürk's image of a brave, virtuous and successful warrior, becoming the first work to break the taboo of the undisputed militarist myth. This anti-heroic representation meant a revolution in the national media landscape, as well as an unprecedented challenge vis-à-vis the regime.

CONCLUSIONS

This research grew out of the question of if and how it was possible that a culture of dissent could exist in Turkey's mainstream under the authoritarian and censoring context of the military regime of 1980 to 1983. Central to this investigation has been graphic satire, which I have approached as an active agent of political participation, able to convey the mood and experiences of civil society and, in so doing, to contest power. In order to establish if and to what extent the political potential of satire was successfully at play in the repressive context of the regime, I considered the genre not only as a historical record of crucial issues, but also, above all, as a historical 'event' that was deeply embedded in the military rule and that contributed to the political experience of those years in its own peculiar way.

The case of the popular satirical magazine *Gırgır* revealed that under the military rule the political potential of satire could be successfully exploited. Despite the regime's repressive apparatus, its severe and unpredictable censorship criteria, and the magnitude of forbidden works and persecuted artists and intellectuals, *Gırgır* managed to carry on with a culture of dissent – neither succumbing to repression nor giving up its well-established presence in the mainstream market.

Summary of findings

This thesis has discussed *Gırgır*'s political strategies of dissent, which emerged as articulated on two levels, namely the authorial and the content one.

As far as the authorial level is concerned, two strategies were identified. The first is the publication of two pages entirely dedicated to amateur and semi-amateur cartoonists, respectively. These spaces hosted illustrations that reached the headquarters of *Gırgır* from all over the country and treated the most diverse subjects, providing potentially anyone with a chance to, first, publicly express themselves, second, share their own perception of life under the military rule, and, third, eventually make their dissent manifest, since these cartoons were published along with the full name and city of their authors. In brief, the amateur and semi-amateur cartoons were highly politically charged in the light of their very nature and structure.

Furthermore, from a perception perspective these spaces allowed the readers – potentially including the junta – to access the impressions and feelings of other citizens with respect to the socio-political atmosphere of the time. Finally, they contributed significantly to going beyond the mainly 'Istanbul-centric' point of view of the regular cartoons, offering a glimpse of the climate in other parts of Turkey. Altogether, while gatherings and public debates on politics were banned and all associations outlawed, the amateur and semi-amateur pages came to represent a unique space for readers to meet virtually and share their discontent, hence a precious platform to contrast the attempts of the government to silence public opinion.

The second editorial policy that emerged is the publication of cartoons made by political prisoners. As we have seen, with only a few exceptions the prisoner-authors were not familiar with the art of cartooning before their arrest; on the contrary, they began to create illustrations exactly in response to their prison experience. These images reproduced life behind bars and were sent to *Gırgır* where they were then published on the amateur or semi-amateur pages along with the name, surname, and place of detention of the author.

As our analysis has shown, these cartoons became an extraordinary source of information for the readership concerning the atrocities that were being committed behind the walls of the prisons. Still, their merit is not limited to that. From the point of view of these amateur cartoonists, *Gırgır*'s commitment to publishing their work meant an opportunity to, first of all, prove to the outside world (and themselves) that they were still alive, second, to share their experiences publicly, and, last but not least, to become (or remain) politically engaged against the regime, despite the fact that their political activity (or even mere interest) was precisely why they had been arrested in the first place.

These two editorial lines proved that ordinary people, free as well as imprisoned ones, actively responded to the military power. Their participation in the satire machine of *Gırgır* as contributors besides readers, in particular their decision to share their own views and denounce aspects of the military rule in the magazine, is indeed astonishing considering the climate of fear inflicted by the regime. Their participation revealed that the military seizure of power did not simply cause either anti-regime sentiments in activism and militancy, on the one hand, or total political disengagement, on the other. On the contrary, it proved the existence of small yet significant acts of bravery on the part of civil society, that is to say of people who, although not artists, chose the artistic form of cartooning to express their dissent.

As far as the content of *Gırgır*'s graphic satire is concerned, we have seen that the magazine articulated its political engagement in a number of ways. The cartoons of the triennium touched upon a vast range of questions that oscillated between social and political themes. So, strictly political denunciations were alternated with merely social ones; at the same time, apparently social matters could actually conceal strong political criticism; and, finally, some social issues became political in the particular circumstances of the regime, insofar as the mode of governance of the military implied the responsibility of the government. The targets of this graphic satire were the most diverse topics, including ordinary practices of daily life and less obvious fields like the entertainment industry.

The presence of social and political themes in the illustrations revealed that the satirical line that defined *Gırgır*'s identity before the coup retained its importance also afterwards. This satire frequently played with the boundaries between the social and the political, and made it intentionally difficult to label the cartoons as distinctly belonging to one or the other, or as clearly criticising the military rule. It was stressed that such continuity was anything but predictable; conversely, the decision to not give up the previous editorial line proved that the cartoonists were not afraid of the drastic political and cultural change that the regime was trying to impose on the country. Instead, they were determined to resist it.

Within this political and social satire, three strategies emerged as targeting the military in power more explicitly. First, the analysis showed that a great majority of illustrations challenged the armed forces in their self-attached technocratic responsibility, that is to say as political leaders of the country. The assessment of the protagonists who were targeted more often in these cartoons – Özal, Aldıkaçtı, and Doğramacı – revealed that the policies perceived as the most detrimental were the financial reforms, the new constitution, and the centralised control of the higher education system. This trend, too, revealed continuity with pre-1980 *Gırgır*, since these were caricatures in the most traditional definition of the term, in other words portraits that denounced the dishonest intentions of their subjects by means of verbal exaggerations and physical distortions. What was new was their ultimate target, that is to say the architects at the roots of these policies: namely, the junta.

The second strategy was identified as crossing the strictly political dimension of the regime and revealing its darkest side by targeting the armed forces as oppressors, through a graphic narration of the practices and consequences of persecution. The illustrations that fell under this category were so large in number and so detailed in the aspects that they portrayed, that by examining the entire corpus it was possible to retrace a step-by-step account of repression, as the analysis proved. The narration started from the phenomenon of mass

imprisonment with cartoons that showed citizens with various social and professional statuses falling victim to arrests. The emphasis, in these illustrations, was on the randomness according to which the regime chose its victims. The next step was prison, where the fictional political prisoners were forced to endure extreme living conditions. Life behind bars appeared essentially divided into two moments, each with its respective problems: first of all cell routine, characterised by poor sanitary conditions, challenging activities, and contrasting feelings; and then the interruptions of said routine, notably in the form of interrogations, dominated by systematic violence and torture. As the analysis reiterated several times, in these circumstances the protagonists appeared sometimes exhausted, but never resigned or scared; these portrayals stressed the morality of the prisoners as opposed to the brutality of the interrogators and prison guards, in relation to whom even the mice were depicted as more human and kind. The narration ended with post-release moments, where the former detainees were portrayed as having serious difficulties in reintegrating into society and conducting an ordinary life. Unmistakably, the point of these scenes is that the trauma of the prison experience is too profound to be dealt with and forgotten.

It was discussed that as intense and grisly as they might have appeared to the readership of that time, these illustrations represented a ground-breaking case in the mainstream media landscape of those years; in fact, while violence, torture and death under detention were facts that conceivably many knew but no-one broadcast, with these cartoons *Gırgır* constantly kept them in the public eye. The immense value of these sketches lay in the courage of narrating scenes that discredited the methods and behaviour of the authorities, thus refuting the official narration of the good regime that acts for the benefit of civil society. Moreover, the majority of these cartoons were based on first-hand experience, for their authors were prisoners themselves. Overall, this strategy showed that *Gırgır*'s authors, including political prisoners, did not fear the regime or the silence that surrounded detention centres. Quite the contrary, they fought them by circulating counter-information.

The third strategy was defined as crossing the boundaries of the political arena to graphically challenge the military in their most natural guise, that is, as soldiers. This strategy developed almost entirely through the regular strip *Biraz da savaşalım*, that every week proposed misadventures of men in uniform in their two environments by definition, namely the barracks and the battlefield. The protagonists of these sketches were low rank soldiers and their commanders, who interacted with each other during training and with enemy troops during war. The multiple and nuanced profiles that emerged in the analysis may be summarised as childish, lacking bravery and not particularly clever, in the case of simple

soldiers; violent and overestimating themselves as far as higher ranks are concerned. By denying the efficiency and bravery upon which the armed forces traditionally built their glorious image, this saga ultimately highlighted the failure of the military in power to earn respect and credibility.

These strategies determined *Gırgır*'s multi-dimensional political engagement vis-à-vis the military rule. Compared to the previous years, its satirical line retained elements of continuity that confirmed its pro-people, anti-political class character. At the same time, the magazine explored new paths tailored to the current political situation that made the attacks on power numerous and more effective.

A common feature that has emerged from the content-related strategies is a certain degree of self-censorship. This has become manifest in the political caricatures insofar as they targeted only civilian members among the highest seats of power; in the scenes of repression since they featured only local representatives of authority (prison directors, guards and interrogators); and in the adventures on the battlefield as they detailed only anonymous and stereotyped soldiers. In brief, the five members of the junta were never made the protagonists of this satire directly, neither by amateurs nor by professionals, let alone prisoners.

Yet, it was argued that this self-censorship shall be regarded as a clever precaution rather than a limit, since it is exactly the narrowing of the spectrum of satirised subjects that allowed the magazine to survive on the mainstream market throughout the whole military rule. In other words, had *Gırgır* risked explicitly portraying the five generals giving orders on disastrous policies or on torture, in all likelihood it would have been banned throughout the whole triennium. Instead, self-censorship allowed the magazine to keep addressing a wide public and carry on its political criticism in ways that, as the analysis has illustrated, were extremely pungent nonetheless.

While the absence of the junta from the illustrations was explained as a strategic choice of the magazine to safeguard its own survival, the thesis also discussed the issues that did not appear in the cartoons during the regime for reasons unrelated to censorship. In particular, Turkey's foreign policy, international affairs, and religion were noted for their sporadic presence. It was argued that the low quantity of illustrations dealing with foreign and international affairs should be ascribed to a certain degree of disinterest on the part of the magazine. That disinterest was explained by the fact that the majority of these issues did not affect the population directly, thus they were relatively appealing from the point of view of a satire that used to speak for ordinary people. Religion, then, was not an explicit target of satire

since *Gırgır* never meant to attack it in terms of personal belief; nonetheless, the magazine did not fail to mock the opinions, arrogance, and habits of conservatives. This mockery was all the more meaningful under a regime that started to impose religion as a moral standard.

Generally speaking, the strategic limitations that cartoonists applied to their work proved successful; nevertheless, we have seen that on one occasion self-censorship fell out of line with the standards of the military and *Gırgır* fell under the grip of censorship. The magazine was banned for four weeks and was forced to pay a fine because of a cartoon that was accused of insulting the Turkish flag. This, however, turned out to be a double-edged sword for the regime, as it earned *Gırgır* an unprecedented popularity. In fact, one month later, the public welcomed its return to the market with a sales record that elevated it to the best-selling weekly in the country and placed it among the most popular satirical magazines of the world. It has also been stressed that, despite the previous ban, the editorial policies of the magazine remained unchanged until the end of the regime. Thus, it was concluded that the *Gırgır* team turned the ban into a statement: the prohibition had not scared them.

The ultimate question that arose from this episode is why the magazine was censored only on that one occasion, given that its satire was extremely critical throughout the triennium. The discussion of different explanations led to the conclusion that the regime did not fully understand the meaning of *Gırgır*'s satire; hence, it never became completely aware of its critical potential. In the eyes of the military *Gırgır* was nothing more than an entertainment magazine that had crossed the limit once by mocking the Turkish flag. Other than that, its comic facade and the self-censorship strategy prevented the regime from truly understanding its subversive power. Therefore, the conclusion that was drawn was that while the generals were afraid of what was explicitly political and intellectual, they did not necessarily understand the impact of other means of cultural production.

To summarise, *Gırgır* was able to elaborate a successful response to the military power. It was successful insofar as it proved to be the right formula to express criticism of the military rule and, at the same time, to avoid censorship and persecution. In this way, *Gırgır* became and remained a trustworthy point of reference on issues that the majority of mainstream media did not deal with, and also a platform of political dialogue among professional cartoonists, readers, and political prisoners. Altogether, it became a conduit through which members of civil society communicated and reached a degree of consensus, so

an agent of opposition to the depoliticisation and uniformity that the junta was trying to impose on culture and society along with the delegitimation of criticism itself.

With regard to the history of Turkey's graphic satire, this study has revealed that it is a mistake to gloss over the mainstream production of the years of military rule, as the majority of studies have tended to do. As it was argued in the introduction, that mistake arises from a prejudice, whose biggest defect is that it succumbs to a logic of success of the regime. That is, deliberately or not, this prejudice takes for granted that the regime actually managed to silence dissenting political satire. Conversely, this research has proved that this assumption deserves further scrutiny.

With respect to the regime, then, this study has shown that the repressive machine of the military rule was not so perfect; on the contrary, it could be fooled. The case of *Gırgır* has also proved that radicalisation and depoliticisation were not the only two responses to the political crisis; by contrast, in-between political alternatives were elaborated too. These alternatives did not necessarily emerge separately in the intellectual and artistic world, on the one hand, and in civil society, on the other; instead, they saw the involvement of these two spheres together. This union created a common resistance that was at the same time social, political, and cultural, and that strengthened the freedom of both spheres vis-à-vis the regime.

Epilogue

The restoration of parliamentary democracy in 1983 was not a landmark in the history of *Gırgır*. Obviously, the return of party leaders to the political arena and the easing of the public debate with respect to some of the taboos imposed by the military rule came to provide a richer variety of satirical targets and topics compared to the previous triennium; yet, this turn of events did not mark a significant change in the magazine. This observation should not come as a surprise, though: for a satire that had kept its political line as critical as possible during the regime by limiting change to the minimum extent, a similarly limited switch was bound to be noted after 1983.

What the regime had not managed to do, namely to undermine *Gırgır*'s strength, the market did in the following years. The mid-1980s were characterised by a mushrooming of satirical magazines on the model of *Gırgır*. In the light of the importance of the latter that was discussed throughout this work, it is correct to say that *Gırgır* itself contributed to the proliferation of these magazines to a large extent. That is to say, with the political function

that it had covered and high success recorded during the regime, *Gırgır* had become a model that cartoonists, veterans as much as young novices, were willing to imitate. However, every new title inevitably aroused curiosity that gradually drew the readership away from it; so, it is fair to claim that, in a way, *Gırgır* was the cause of its own loss of verve during the mid-1980s. In fact, even though some new magazines lasted only a few months, others managed to conquer a prominent space in the market, slowly replacing *Gırgır* in the heart of the readers.

Weakening *Gırgır* further was the hardening of Özal's rule toward the end of the decade. As it was explained in Chapter 4, Özal, who had been tolerant of political satire and criticism in general, changed attitude during the electoral campaign of 1987, and even more after those elections confirmed him in power. As a result, media corporations became increasingly uneasy about publishing political satire, whose financial weight came to be aggravated by the rise in the cost of paper and by the risk of pecuniary sanctions. In this tense media context, disagreement between *Gırgır*'s editor and owner began. Meanwhile, the other satirical magazines that by then competed on the market and that had been founded by cartoonists independent of any media group were still able to offer the readers a political satire that did not fail their expectations. It is somehow ironic that in particular *Limon*, founded in 1985 by a group of ex-*Gırgır*ers, came to replace it.

As it was mentioned in the introduction, the disagreements between *Gırgır*'s editor and owner translated into the sudden sale of the magazine in 1989. This decision, of which the staff was informed only afterwards, prompted Aral and other colleagues to leave overnight. As a matter of fact, this caused the decline of the magazine. Even though its publication was never interrupted, the glorious *Gırgır* that had made generations impatient to read the new issue every week for almost two decades had disappeared, deprived of its verve and most brilliant minds.

Gırgır survives today, although its satire is outdone by that of other titles, in particular *Leman* (since 1991; heir to the above mentioned *Limon*, as explained in the last chapter),[1] *Penguen* (Penguin, born from a secession from *Leman* in 2002), and *Uykusuz* (Restless, founded in 2007). The cultural and political landscape in which these magazines operate is profoundly different from the one of the regime, and yet in some respects worryingly similar. In fact, the absence of formal regimes since 1983 should not encourage us to take the freedom of satire for granted. On the contrary, it was already stated that in the late 1980s Özal became

[1] See Chapter 6, footnote 3.

increasingly intolerant of criticism. Then, the 1990s were a decade of arrests and lawsuits for cartoonists.[2] Finally, in the 2000s and 2010s, the rule of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP), at the helm of the country since 2002, has posed new challenges.

At present, the growing authoritarianism of the government is undeniable. In terms of freedom of expression, for example, a rising number of journalists have been detained and sentenced to various fines.[3] But the war against satire started long before. It began as early as 2003, when many both inside and outside Turkey still looked to the AKP as a party of hope (of a democracy that did not deny religious identity, of minorities' recognition, of EU access), that its leader Recep Tayyıp Erdoğan showed the first signs of intolerance to cartoons. That year, an illustration published in the daily *Evrensel* (Universal) on April 5 earned its author, Sefer Selvi, a lawsuit of 10,000 Turkish Lira.[4]

Selvi's did not remain an isolated case. *Cumhuriyet* was suited to 5,000 TL for an editorial cartoon by Musa Kart published on May 9 2004.[5] In solidarity, on February 24 2005 *Penguen* came out with a cover illustration that alluded to the incriminated caricature made by the *Cumhuriyet* colleague; as a result, *Penguen* got a 40,000 TL lawsuit.[6] Also, *Leman* and its cartoonist Mehmet Çağçağ were ordered to pay compensation of 25,000 TL for the cover illustration of July 6 2006; the magazine was tried again for the cover of February 6 2008, for which a 20,000 TL fine was ordered.[7] In the end, these lawsuits were all rejected by the court,

[2] Between 1993 and 1998 cartoonists like İsmail Gülgeç and Nuri Kurtcebe were taken to court for their illustrations of the government and its ministers. These two men were eventually acquitted, but others had a different fate. For instance, Ertan Aydın, Ahmet Erkanlı, and Doğan Güzel were sentenced respectively to a total of 21 months, 10 months and 40 months. See Aslı Tunç, "Pushing the Limits of Tolerance. Functions of Political Cartoonists in the Democratization Process: The case of Turkey," *International Communication Gazette* Vol. 64, No. 1, (2002), pp. 47-62. See also Tuğba Kaplan, "Çizgili muhalefet. Özgürlükler azalınca mizah keskinleşir", *Zaman*, 23 November 2014 http://www.zaman.com.tr/pazar_ozgurlukler-azalinca-mizah-keskinlesir_2259438.html (accessed 24/11/2014) and Atila Özer, "Karikatür ve Siyaset", *Bianet*, 30 September 2004 http://bianet.org/bianet/toplum/44187-karikatur-ve-siyaset (accessed 21/07/2010).

[3] To mention but two significant data, 23 journalists and 9 publishers are in jail as of July 2015. Also, according to the latest report by Reporters Without Borders, Turkey ranks 149 out of 180 countries for freedom of expression. Cf. Erol Önderoğlu, "BIA Apr-May-Jun 2015 Media Monitoring Report. News and Journalists Under the "Control" of Erdoğan/AKP are at Risk", *Bianet*, 14 July 2015 http://bianet.org/english/freedom-of-expression/166031-news-and-journalists-under-the-control-of-erdogan-akp-are-at-risk (accessed 14/07/2015) and Reporters Without Borders, *Index of Press Freedom 2015. Turkey* http://index.rsf.org/#!/index-details/TUR (accessed 03/07/2015).

[4] Anonymous, "Sefer Selvi, Penguen'e verilen cezayı çizdi", *Evrensel*, 29 March 2015 http://www.evrensel.net/haber/109066/sefer-selvi-penguene-verilen-cezayi-cizdi (accessed 29/03/2015)

[5] Erol Önderoğlu, "Leman Dergisine Başbakan Davası Başladı", *Bianet*, 2 November 2006 http://m.bianet.org/bianet/medya/87213-leman-dergisine-basbakan-davasi-basladi (accessed 21/07/2010) and Erol Önderoğlu, "Prime Minister Again Sues Cartoonists", *Bianet*, 21 February 2008 http://bianet.org/english/print/105043-prime-minister-again-sues-cartoonists (accessed 21/07/2010).

[6] Id.

[7] Id.

but new ones were claimed afterwards and the list of examples could continue up to recent times.

Let us also point out that the grip on satirical illustrations applies not only to local cartoonists, but also to foreigners living in Turkey. For instance, Istanbul-based British artist Michael Dickinson was persecuted at various times since 2006 for two collages that involved Erdoğan. He was finally deported in 2013.[8]

These episodes show that the critical potential of graphic satire is as active as ever, and that intolerance to such criticism exists also in elected governments. Actually, in the interviews and private conversations conducted during this research, it was common to hear comparisons between the 1980-1983 regime and the AKP rule. The majority of interviewees agree that the state of tension that intellectuals, artists, and civil society have become familiar with in the past ten years is possibly more worrying than the one experienced under the regime. This judgement is made on the ground that explicit repression has been replaced by a constant threat of crossing a line that is unclear, whose consequences become more unpredictable with time. Nevertheless, we should be extremely cautious about affirming that AKP intolerance has overcome that of the junta. When making such an evaluation, it is necessary to not forget the atrocities committed by the regime and the victims of those years – assuming that the comparison makes sense at all.

New research horizons

With this brief overview of post-1983 *Gırgır* and more generally graphic satire in Turkey, this thesis has come to an end. This work was a starting point on a topic that is indeed wider than this study was able to cover. A number of aspects were left unexamined as a result of choices made by the author; however this is not to say that they were deemed irrelevant. On the contrary, it is believed that they would benefit from closer examination; so, starting from them, this work could be expanded in a number ways.

First and foremost, as it was admitted in the introduction, the choice of concentrating exclusively on *Gırgır* limited the reconstruction of the wider satirical landscape of the time. My concern has been to allow the actual contents of the magazine to reveal new aspects of the

[8] Anonymous, "Artist fined for art mocking Turkey's prime minister", *BBC News*, 27 January 2010 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/wear/8483479.stm (accessed 1/11/2013) and Michael Dickinson, "Tossed Out Of Turkey After Twenty Seven Years", *CounterPunch*, 1 November 2013 http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/11/01/tossed-out-of-turkey-after-twenty-seven-years/ (accessed 1/11/2013).

regime and the resistance; this was achieved by delving into a close textual analysis, that was deemed all the more important in the light of the lack of such detailed examinations in other studies, so as a first case in the historiography. Now, this analysis would benefit immensely from a broader study of the satire of the years in question. An option could be the examination of the political cartoons published in the four titles originally considered for this study and excluded later on, namely *Fırt*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Hürriyet*, and *Tercüman*. Still, the choice of titles to be scrutinised, also in comparison with the satire that has emerged from this work, can be much wider – as can the focus that such an examination would have. This endeavour would rescue this thesis from the lack of context in which it might have fallen. Like the present work, a study of this nature would contribute to the historiography on both Turkey's graphic satire and the regime.

Other research paths that this thesis has opened are situated in the studies on the regime and graphic satire, respectively. With reference to the regime, the fact that the military rule was aware of the existence of *Gırgır* but did not fully comprehend its subversive power suggests that the same could also be true for other cases in the artistic, intellectual, and media spheres. Thus, it seems necessary to look for these cases and investigate them. Studies in this direction would have the merit of, first, doing justice to other agents who experimented with means of resistance that challenged power; second, contributing to breaking what was defined in the introduction as the "1980 prejudice", according to which the regime was too repressive for a culture of dissent to survive at mainstream level; and third, defining a clearer pattern of the limits and shortcomings of the regime.

Let us also stress that a fact that emerged from the research that backed this thesis is that, in general, from the availability of archival material to people's willingness to share their experiences, the time is ripe for new historical enquiries into aspect of the regime that in the past were inconceivable.

Regarding graphic satire, then, the paths suggested by this thesis are multiple. In particular, it appears urgent to delve into the study of post-1983 satire in detail. Misled by the "1980 prejudice", scholarly work on the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s is still rare compared to previous eras. Studies in this direction would contribute to a better understanding of the evolution of this genre in a fast changing country that, also in recent decades, has always shown a great appreciation for political cartoons. Moreover, these studies would have the merit of helping to assess the actual impact of the regime on the genre in the long run.

Another research avenue that seems pressing is a comparative study of satire and power under different authoritarian eras. A necessary comparison is certainly the one between

the military interregnum of the early 1970s and the regime of the following decade. Besides, the recent parallelism between the AKP rule and the regime, which was pointed out above, makes a confrontation between these two political eras promising, too.

Furthermore, this study could be expanded beyond the Turkish case by developing similar or comparative perspectives on the political satire produced under other regimes across the world, either contemporary, preceding, or following the 1980-1983 one. Parallel studies already abound in many cases, especially in relation to the regimes of the first half of the twentieth century. Despite that, also for these cases the research could be expanded further in numerous directions, given the revealing potential of satire. Comparative studies, then, could be particularly interesting in relation to the regimes that involved other regions of the world in the same years as Turkey's experiences with military coups.

Ultimately, while discussing future research on graphic satire in specific geographic and historical contexts, we should be aware that in the global era the genre has taken on a new international dimension. A cartoon may spark stronger reactions abroad than in the country in which it is published, and may have consequences that increase its strength but also its dangerous potential. Recent events like the publication of the Muhammad cartoons in Denmark in September 2005 and the *Charlie Hebdo* (Charlie Weekly) attack of January 2015 in Paris have shown that cartoons have the power to mobilise various social, religious, and political groups at international level, both in terms of actions (defence and condemnation of the cartoons) and reactions (condemnation of the attacks, Muslim communities' dissociation, the caution of non-Muslims not to point the finger at the Muslim community as a whole, but also Islamophobia and xenophobia). In this rapidly changing world, with its constantly evolving societies, political models, cultural references, and means of communication, one of the few things that seem to remain a certainty is that satire continues to have significant mobilising potential.

APPENDIX

THE CARTOONS DEBATED IN THE THESIS

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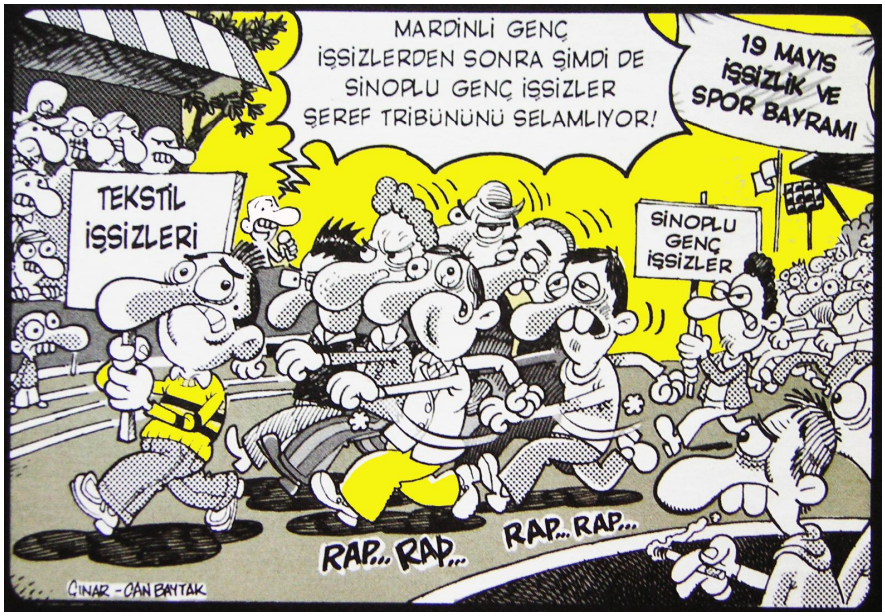

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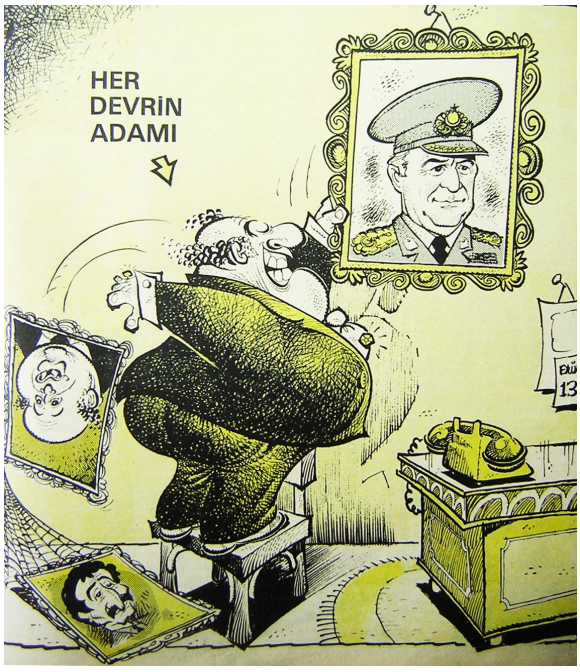

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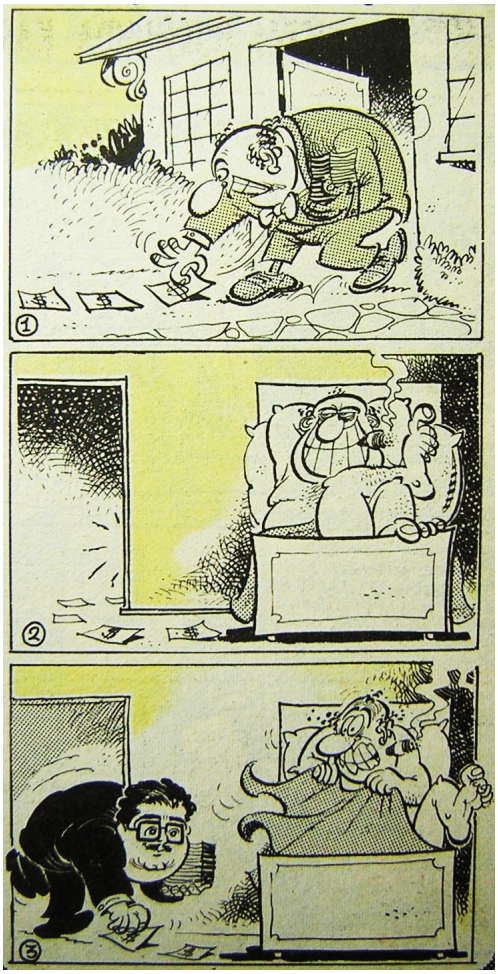

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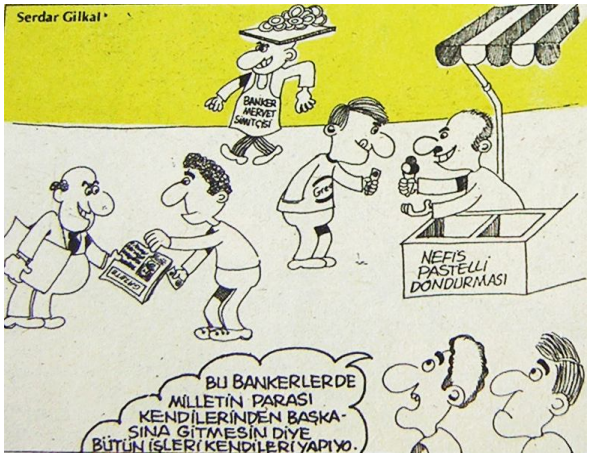

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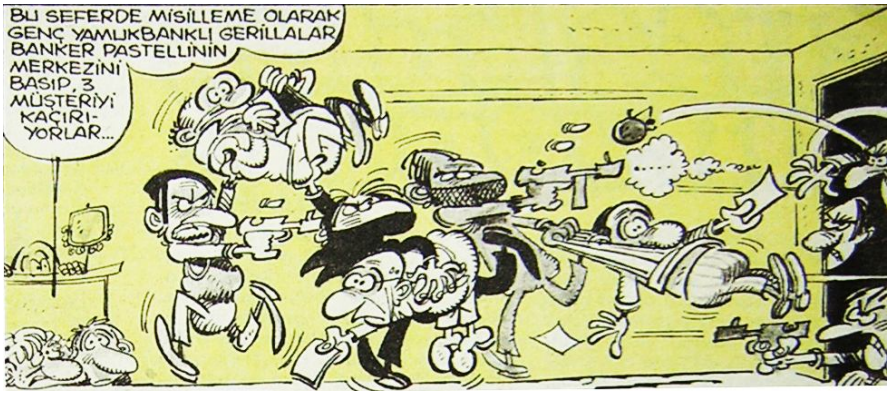

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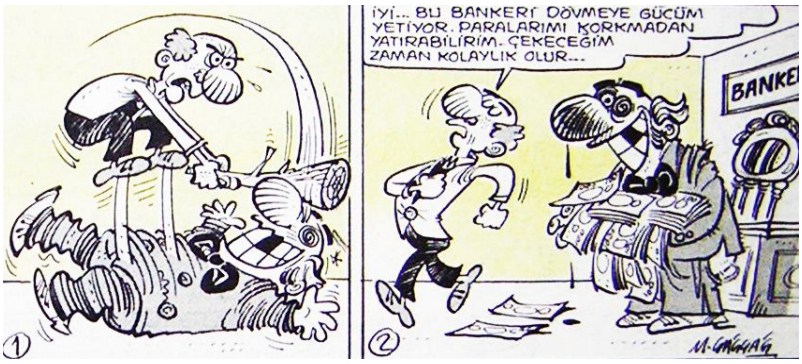

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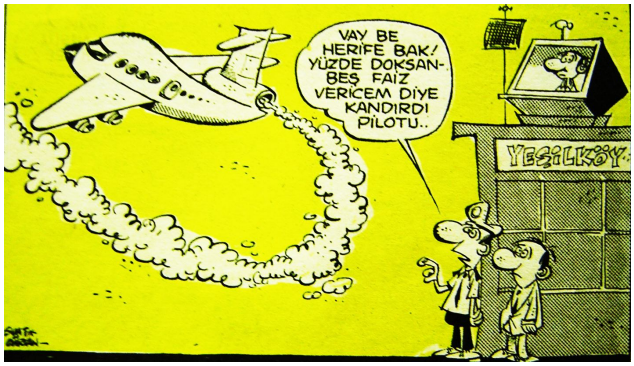

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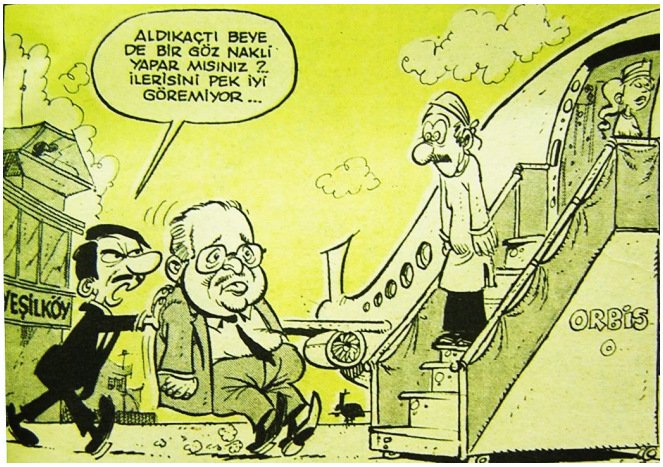

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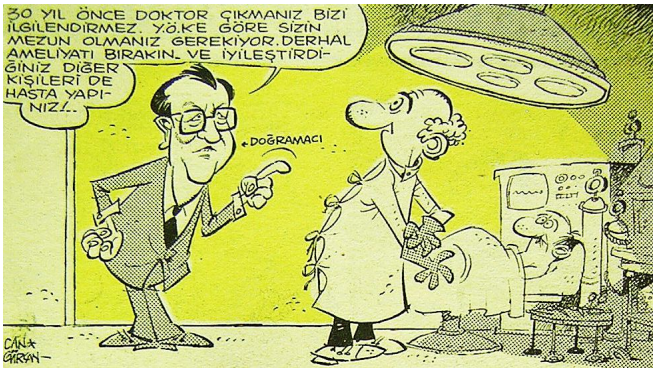

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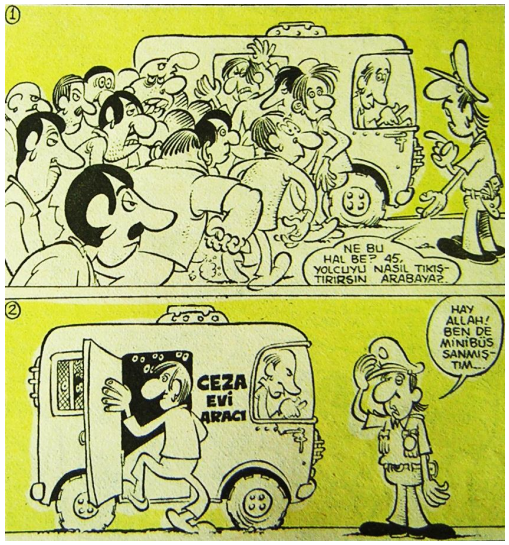

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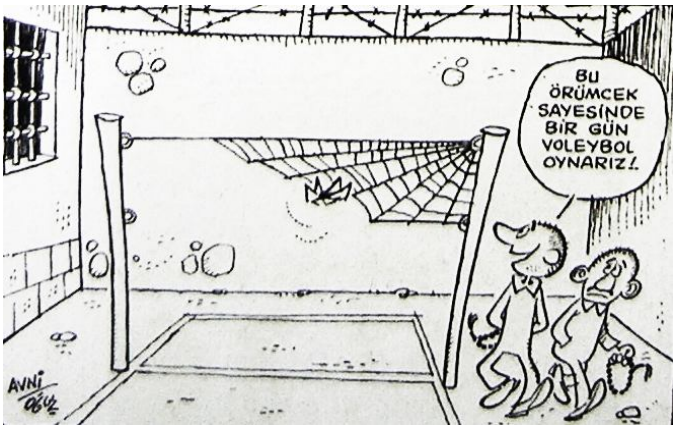

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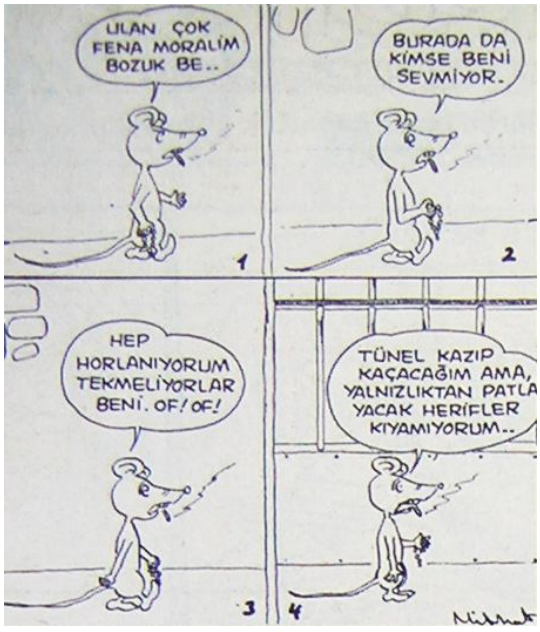

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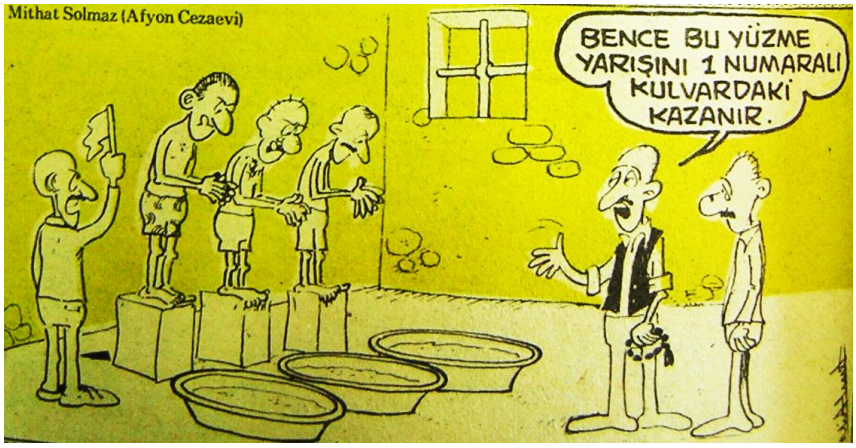

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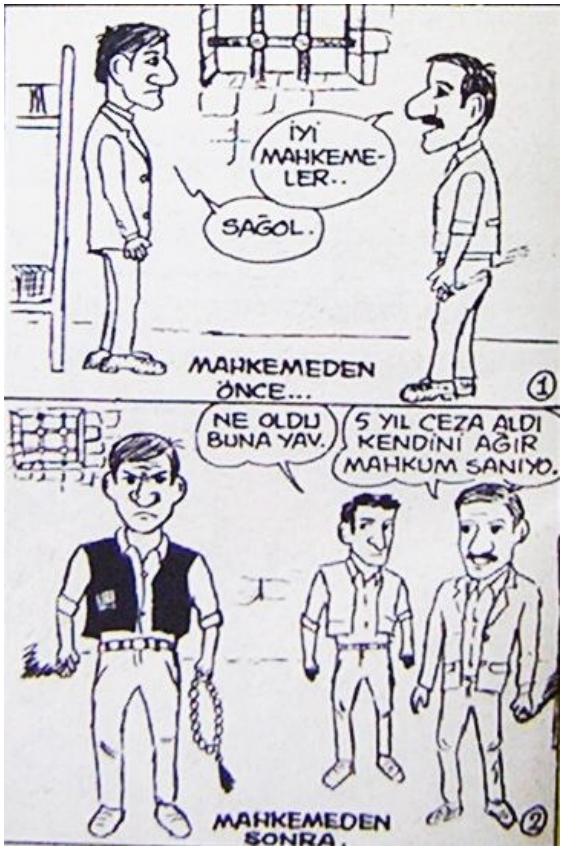

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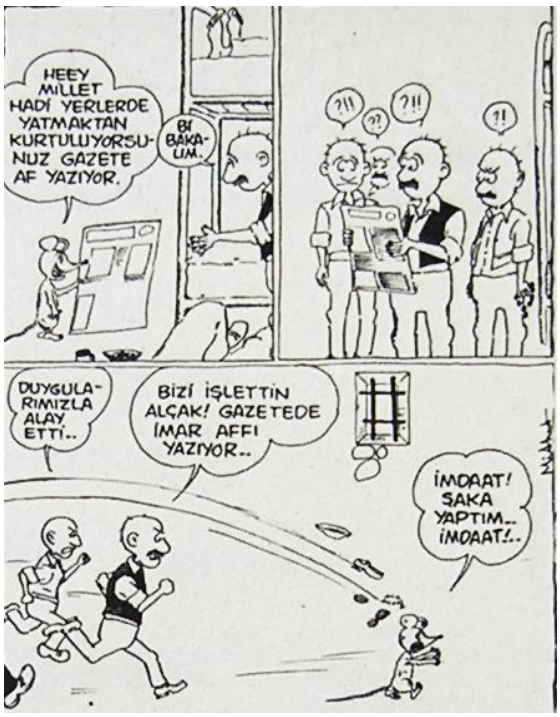

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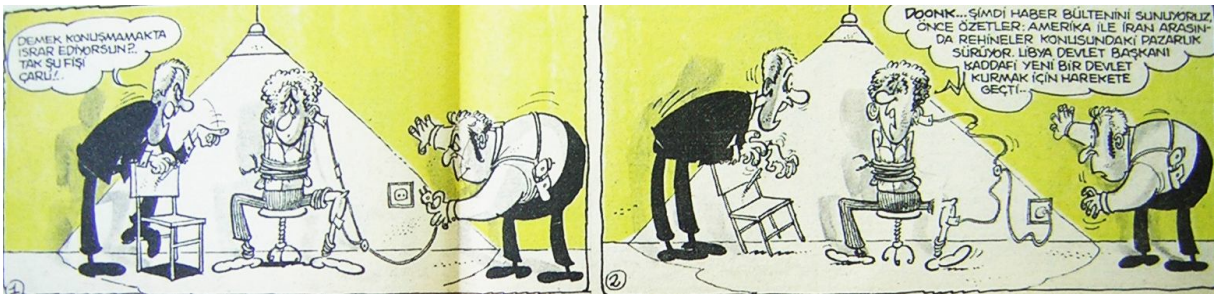

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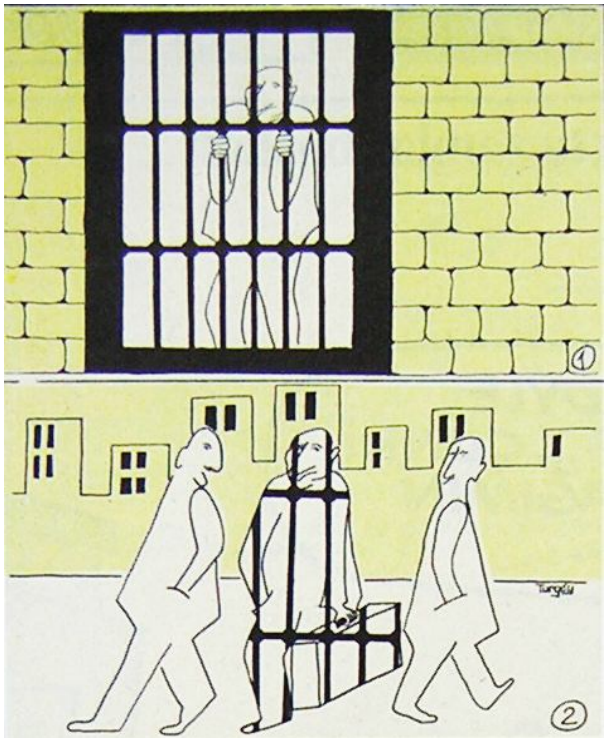

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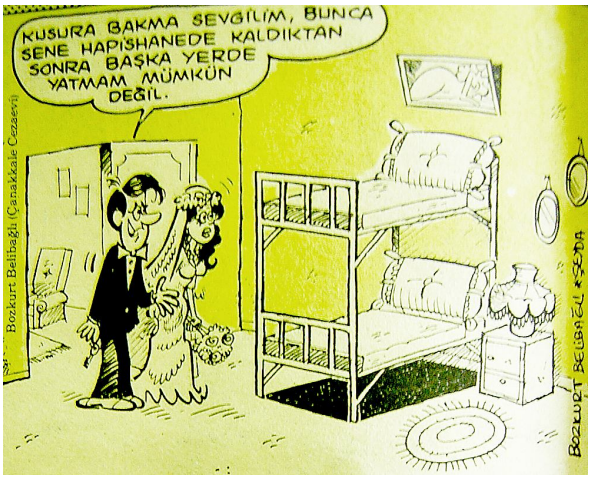

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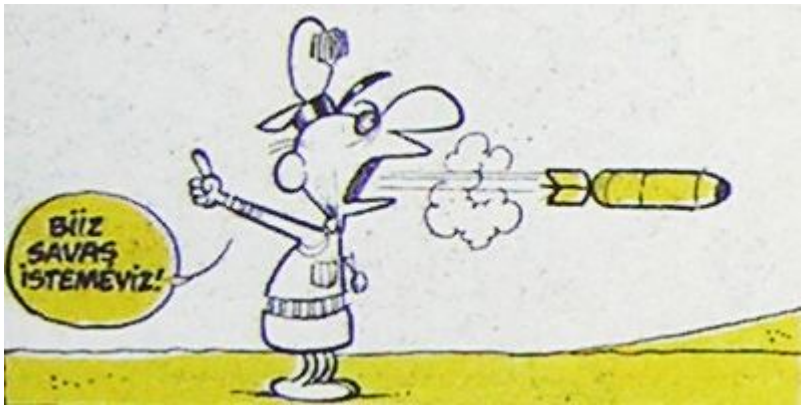

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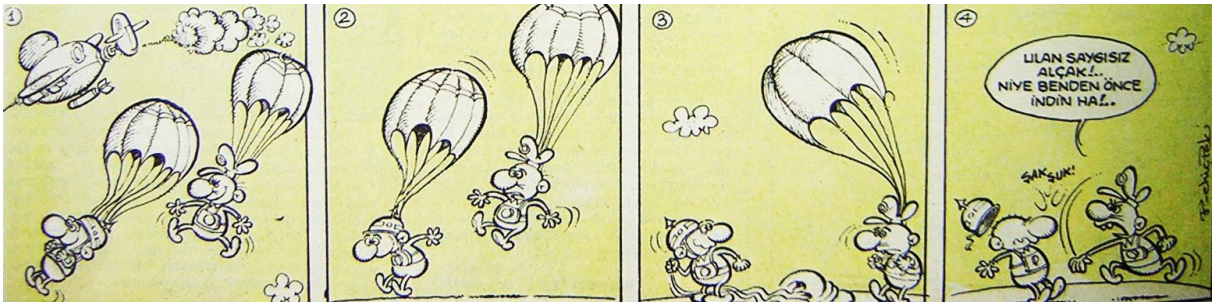

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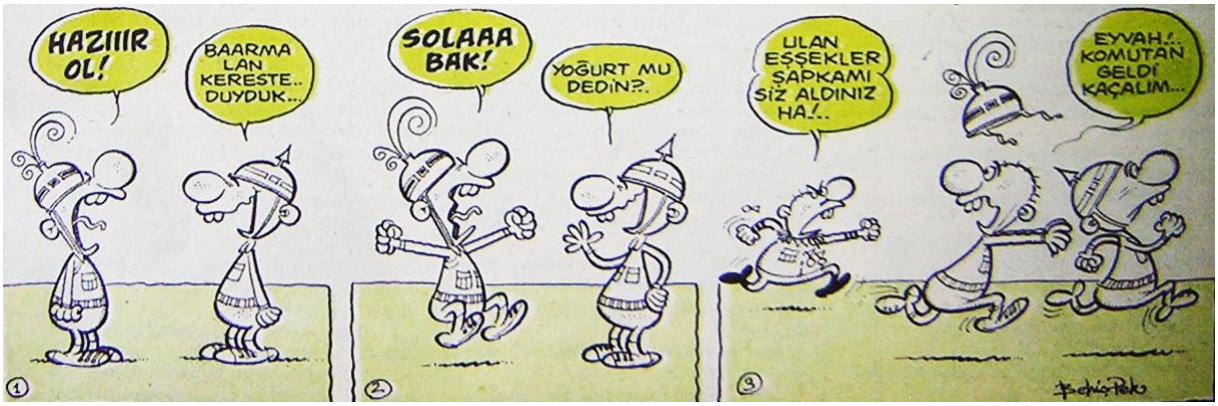

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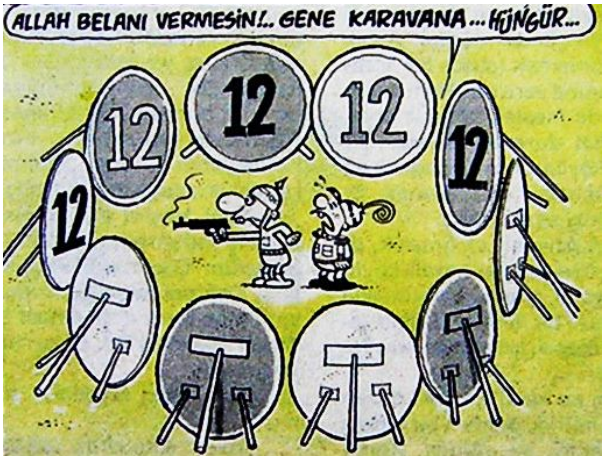

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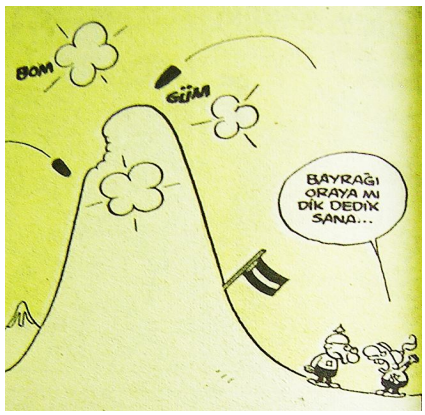

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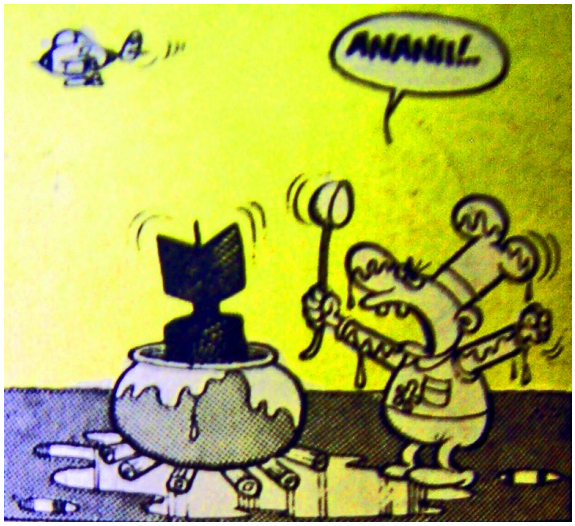

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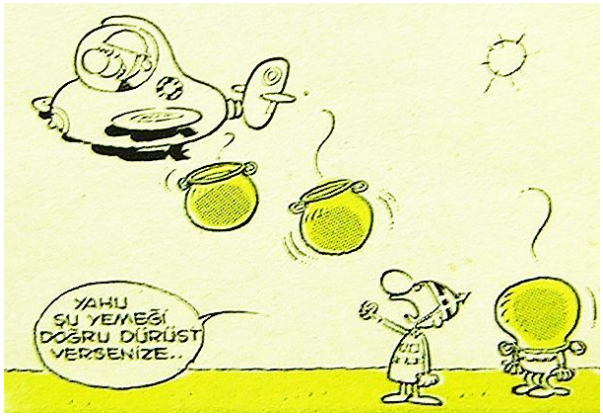

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French Institute for Anatolian Studies, Istanbul

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Research Center for Anatolian Civilization, Istanbul

SALT Research, Istanbul

Newspapers and Magazines

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Diken, selected issues from the full production (1918-1920)

Diyojen, selected issues from the full production (1870-1873)

Cumhuriyet, selected issues from the years 1970 to 1983

Fırt, selected issues from the years 1976 to 1983

Harakiri, the first issue (2011)

Hürriyet, selected issues from the years 1970 to 1983

Gırgır, selected issues from the full production (1971-present) and all the issues of the years 1980 to 1983

Mikrop, selected issues from the years 1978-1979

Milliyet, selected issues from the years 1970 to 1983

Tercüman, selected issues from the years 1970 to 1983

Interviews

Aral, Seyit Ali; cartoonist and son of *Gırgır*'s editor Oğuz Aral; interviewed by the author, 11/01/2012, Istanbul.

Belibağlı, Bozkurt; art director; amateur cartoonist and detainee under the military rule; private correspondence with the author, 2013-2014.

Bozok, Erdoğan; cartoonist and former director of the Istanbul Center of Cartoon and Humour; interviewed by the author, 17/02/2011, Istanbul.

Cedden, Metin; animation director; amateur cartoonist and detainee under the military rule; private correspondence with the author, 2013-2014.

Çeviker, Turgut; expert on Turkish cartoons; interviewed by the author, 22/12/2011, Istanbul.

Çoğupluğil (Coplu), Orhan; artist; amateur cartoonist and detainee under the military rule; private correspondence with the author, 2013-2014.

Demirci, Cihan; cartoonist, worked for *Gırgır* in 1980-90; interviewed by the author, 28/02/2011, Istanbul.

Demirci, Cihan; cartoonist, worked for *Gırgır* in 1980-90; interviewed by the author, 21/12/2011, Istanbul.

Demirel, Çayan; director of documentary movie *5 No'lu Cezaevi: 1980-1984* (2009, Surela Film, Istanbul); interviewed by the author, 19/06/2012, Istanbul.

Gürsel, Nedim; writer; interviewed by the author, 12/03/2012, Paris.

Hasan, born 1976, fisherman; private conversations with the author, August 2014 and August 2015, Gökçeada.

İdacıtürk, Ruhi; cartoonist; private conversations with the author, February-March 2015, Istanbul.

Masaracı, Kamil; cartoonist and organizer of the Turhan Selçuk International Cartoon Context of Milas; interviewed by the author 17/03/2015, Istanbul.

Mehmet, born 1947, tea vendor; private conversations with the author, March 2012, Istanbul.

Murat, born 1965, engineer; private conversation with the author, 1/09/2013, Burgazada.

Nilgün, born 1951, cook; private conversations with the author, April and July 2010, Istanbul.

Odabaşı, Avni; cartoonist; amateur cartoonist and detainee under the military rule; private correspondence with the author, 2014.

Ömer, born 1958, retired textile worker and former unionist; private conversations with the author, August 2014 and August 2015, Gökçeada.

Pek, Behiç; cartoonist; worked for *Gırgır* in 1976-78 and 1980-90; interviewed by the author, 14/07/2014, Istanbul.

Saydut, Akdağ; cartoonist; private conversations with the author, February-March 2015, Istanbul.

Selçuk, Ruhan; wife of cartoonist Turhan Selçuk; interviewed by the author 17/03/2015, Istanbul.

Solmaz, Mithat; mechanical engineering technician; amateur cartoonist and detainee under the military rule; private correspondence with the author, 2013-2014.

Solmaz, Mithat; mechanical engineering technician; amateur cartoonist and detainee under the military rule; interviewed by the author, 24/03/2014, Istanbul.

Turay, Mevhibe; *Gırgır*'s secretary in 1979-1989, interviewed by the author, 3/01/2013, Istanbul.

Yakalı, Raşit; cartoonist and director of the Istanbul Center of Cartoon and Humour since 2015; private conversations with the author, February-March 2015, Istanbul.

Reportage

Cantek, Levent; expert on Turkish cartoons; interview by Özge Mumcu published in *Nasıl Dergisi*, No. 6, Summer 2011, pp. 1-15.

Cihangiroğlu, Süleyman; administrator of Nesin Vakfı Çocuk Cenneti, a foundation opened by writer Aziz Nesin in 1973 to provide shelter and education to impoverished children of Turkey; interview by Ayşegül Parlayan published in *Atlas Tarih*, No. 32, February-March 2015, pp. 100-102.

Ecer, Abdurrahman; detainee in the Diyarbakır prison during the military rule; interview appeared in the documentary movie *5 No'lu Cezaevi: 1980-1984*, directed by Çayan Demirel, produced by Ayşe Çetinbaş, photography by Koray Kesik, editing by Burak Dal, music by Ahmet Tirgil, Nizamettin Arıç, Serdar Can, 2009, Surela Film, Istanbul.

Erdost, Muzaffer İlhan;[1] poet, novelist and publisher, detained in Ankara Mamak prison under the military rule; interview appeared in the documentary series *12 Eylül*, directed by Mustafa Ünlü, produced by Ali İnandım, presented by Mehmet Ali Birand, scenario by Hikmet Bila and Rıdvan Akar, music by Emrah Özdemir, Barbara Degener, Michael Sapp, tot. 9 episodes, 1998, Gala Film, Istanbul.

[1] Muzaffer Erdost took up the name of his brother İlhan after the latter was killed during detention under the regime, on October 7 1980.

Evren, Kenan; chief of the General Staff 1978-1980, leader of the 1980 military coup, head of state 1980-1983, and president of the Republic 1983-1989; interview appeared in the documentary series *12 Eylül*, directed by Mustafa Ünlü, produced by Ali İnandım, presented by Mehmet Ali Birand, scenario by Hikmet Bila and Rıdvan Akar, music by Emrah Özdemir, Barbara Degener, Michael Sapp, tot. 9 episodes, 1998, Gala Film, Istanbul.

Evren, Kenan; chief of the General Staff 1978-1980, leader of the 1980 military coup, head of state 1980-1983, and president of the Republic 1983-1989; interview by Davut Dursun published in Dursun, Davut, 2005. *12 Eylül Darbesi. Hatıralar, Gözlemler, Düşünceler.* Istanbul: Şehir Yayınları, pp.160-189.

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Uzunoğlu, Erdinç; lawyer; interview appeared in the documentary movie *5 No'lu Cezaevi: 1980-1984*, directed by Çayan Demirel, produced by Ayşe Çetinbaş, photography by Koray Kesik, editing by Burak Dal, music by Ahmet Tirgil, Nizamettin Arıç, Serdar Can, 2009, Surela Film, Istanbul.

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5 No'lu Cezaevi: 1980-1984, directed by Çayan Demirel, produced by Ayşe Çetinbaş, photography by Koray Kesik, editing by Burak Dal, music by Ahmet Tirgil, Nizamettin Arıç, Serdar Can, 2009, Surela Film, Istanbul.

12 Eylül, directed by Mustafa Ünlü, produced by Ali İnandım, presented by Mehmet Ali Birand, scenario by Hikmet Bila and Rıdvan Akar, music by Emrah Özdemir, Barbara Degener, Michael Sapp, tot. 9 episodes, 1998, Gala Film, Istanbul.

Eve Dönüş, written and directed by Ömer Uğur, produced by Hayri Aslan, art direction Veli Kahraman, photography by Mustafa Kuşçu, editing by Ulaş Cihan Şimşek, music by Tamer Çiray, 2006, Limon Production, Istanbul.

Mavi Ring, directed by Ömer Leventoğlu, written by Ömer Leventoğlu, Bayram Balcı, produced by Ömer Leventoğlu, art direction Hale İşsever, photography by Lefteris Agapoulakis, editing by Ramazan Yüksel, music by Orçun Yıldırım, Serhat Bostancı, 2013, Fer Film Productions, Vision Film Produktion GmbH, Turkey, Germany.

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